Commentary

Volume Sixty-nine, Number Six, June 1980

Euro-Neutralism

Walter Laqueur

Freud's Jewish Problem
DAVID ABERBACH

The Facts About Terrorism
CHARLES HORNER

In Defense of Progress
GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

Screen Memories from Germany
RICHARD GRENIER

Is Literature an Equal-Opportunity Employer?
JOSEPH EPSTEIN

The New Black Intellectuals
MURRAY FRIEDMAN

OBSERVATIONS: The Curious History of Waldemar Haffkine
Edythe Lutzker & Carol Jochnowitz

BOOKS IN REVIEW: Michael Novak / Julius Weinberg / Paul Hollander / Stephen Rosen / Franklin Hunt / Hyam Maccoby

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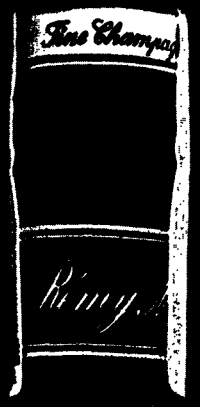
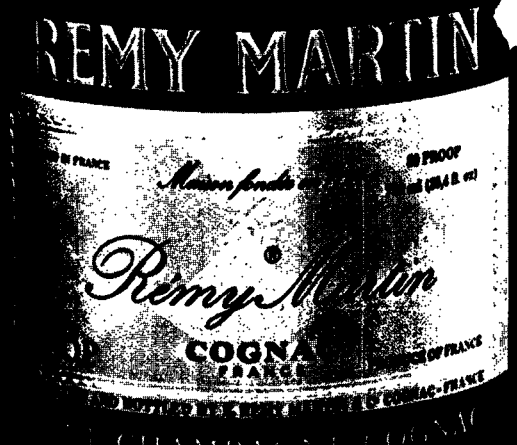


Rémy

V.S.O.P.
FINE CHAMPAGNE



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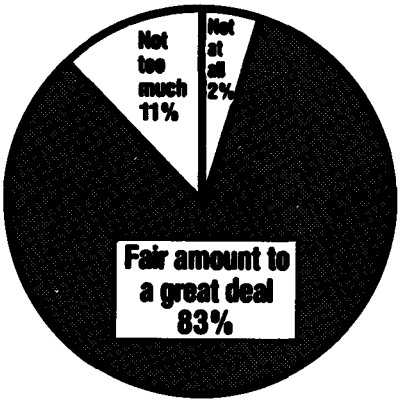
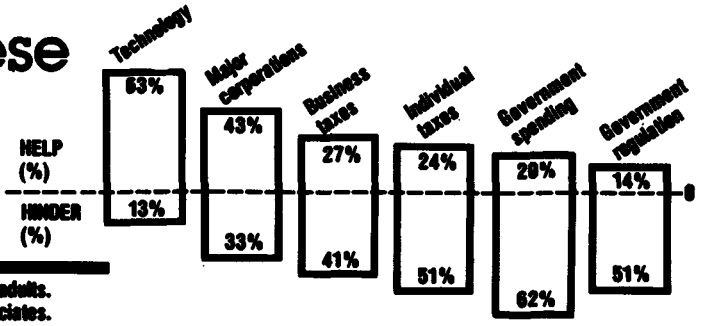
Q: How much do you want the economy to grow in the next five years?



Q: Does each of these help or hinder economic growth?

Note: These are six of thirteen items tested in this question.



Source: October, 1979 national probability sample, by telephone, of 1,000 adults. Survey conducted for Union Carbide by Roger Seasonwein Associates.

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Government has no higher priority in the 1980's than reducing inflation and restoring real growth in the economy. In the present climate, the 'growth/no growth' debate is moot for most Americans. The issue now is how America's policymakers can point the nation toward the non-inflationary growth its people want.

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Commentary

VOLUME 69 NUMBER SIX *JUNE 1980*

Articles	21	Euro-Neutralism *Walter Laqueur*
	28	Is American Literature an Equal-Opportunity Employer? *Joseph Epstein*
	35	Freud's Jewish Problem *David Aberbach*
	40	The Facts About Terrorism *Charles Horner*
	46	The New Black Intellectuals *Murray Friedman*
	53	In Defense of Progress *Gertrude Himmelfarb*
Observations	61	The Curious History of Waldemar Haffkine *Edythe Lutzker and Carol Jochnowitz*
Movies	65	Screen Memories from Germany *Richard Grenier*
Letters	4	from *Paul R. Porter, Joseph Churba, Paul H. Nitze, Benno Weiser Varon, A.J. Goodpaster, George Field, Norman B. Hannah, E. Rowny, John J. Cox, Walter A. Sheldon, Robert D. Greenspan, R.E. Steussy, Norman Podhoretz, William R. Havender, R.J. Herrnstein, Adina Klahr, Robert Milch, Daniel Thursz, Leon Harris, Jonathan D. Sarna, Dale Vree, Arch Puddington,* and others
Books in Review	72	Free to Choose, by Milton and Rose Friedman *Michael Novak*
	74	Summoned to Jerusalem, by Joan Dash *Julius Weinberg*
	78	The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power, by George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi *Paul Hollander*
	79	The Boer War, by Thomas Pakenham *Stephen Rosen*
	82	Democracy and Distrust, by John Hart Ely *Franklin Hunt*
	86	The Gnostic Gospels, by Elaine Pagels *Hyam Maccoby*

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Letters from Readers

The Present Danger

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's description of the ominous character of our present danger is admirable for its historical perspective, scope, and lucidity ["The Present Danger," March]. In nearly all respects I share his conclusions. I recognize that in calling for a renewed policy of containing Soviet imperialism, it was not his intent to examine also what would constitute an effective policy under present conditions. Nonetheless, a brief comment on this problem is appropriate, since a portrayal of the consequences of the decline of American power that does not take account of the large but underutilized strengths that remain to us risks contributing to the defeatist mood Mr. Podhoretz seeks to overcome.

Foremost among underutilized strengths are not only our military potential but also the web of mutual interests among the industrial democracies—a web that has grown hugely in the era launched by the Marshall Plan and NATO. Such interests are, of course, far broader than a common dependence upon oil originating in the region of the Persian Gulf, but the present degree of such dependence puts the freedom of all industrial democracies at risk. It must, therefore, be a central purpose of our foreign policy to engage the other members of NATO and Japan (whose dependence is even greater than our own) in a common protection of access to that oil by world commerce. For them to enjoy the protection without equitably sharing the financial and military responsibilities would be divisive in this country and would further encourage neutralist illusions in theirs.

The ambiguous responses of our European allies and Japan to the invasion of Afghanistan are bound to foster doubts about their willingness to defend themselves. Yet it would be a grave mistake to conclude that majority opinion cannot be rallied in these countries to an effective defense of democracy against the encroachment of Russian Communism. To believe otherwise would be both rash and patronizing. True, the experience of the past thirty-five years suggests that a majority will not so rally in the absence of resolute American leadership, but given such leadership, we may reasonably expect sufficient help within the other democracies for articulating the case for a common defense and for devising its instruments.

Having helped to create the Marshall Plan as a concept and NATO as a functioning organization, as well as to administer the former, I draw upon direct knowledge of events in those years to make my point. The resolution of crises appears to be simple only in retrospect. There are, of course, major differences between the problems of the immediate postwar period and today's, but on balance the differences favor our present prospects. The situation in 1946 was grim in all respects and the path to its resolution was far from clear. Much of Europe had been devastated. Millions were homeless, even more were hungry. Agricultural production was falling. Factories that were not in ruins operated fitfully for want of materials and spare parts. In the tangle of contradictory purposes that governed American policy in Europe, "getting along with the Russians" took precedence. Getting along meant support for their policy of a rash dismantling of German industry on a scale that would have condemned both the Germans and their neighbors to a prolonged poverty and despair which surely would have brought all of Europe under Soviet domination. Not until cooperation with the Soviet Union was subordinated to Europe's well-being was it possible to arrest economic and political disintegration and to begin a triumphant recovery.

I do not suggest that an adequate rally by the industrial democracies will be achieved easily or quickly. All diplomacy is a mix of persuasion and pressure (or at least its prospect). A great deal of both was required to induce Nazi Germany's angry victims to accept as a partner that part of Germany that was again free. It was an American initiative that began Europe's mutual recovery program and then gave impetus toward economic federation now expressed in the European Economic Community, strongly pressed by us upon hesitant governments. Primarily we must rely now, as we did then, upon a clear articulation of a steadfast American pur-

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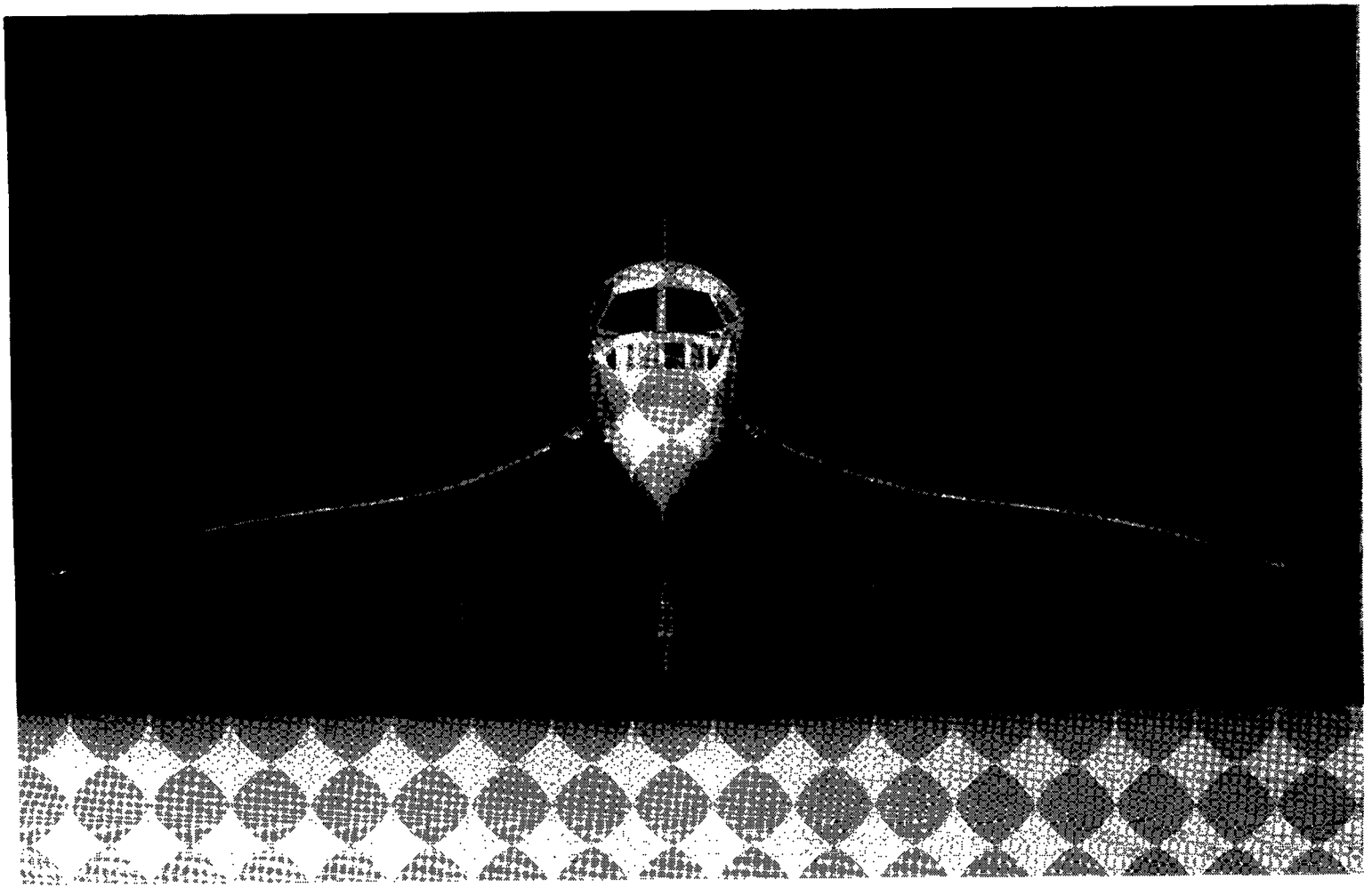
La Différence.



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pose, but in extremity we must be prepared to condition the terms of access to the American market to the cooperation of partners in mutual defense.

At the end of 1952, after a year of intense and difficult negotiations had finally produced agreement on NATO force levels, bases, infrastructure, and shared costs (my occupation being the last), I felt moved to caution against a potential complacency, which I did by noting, in a speech in Paris, the fate of the Confederacy of Delos, NATO's closest historical parallel. The confederacy of many Greek city-states was formed under Athenian leadership in 477 B.C.E., when Persia had been repulsed but was still a military threat and could manipulate substantial factions within Greece. The alliance took its name from the island of Delos where its treasure was kept. Its success was its undoing. As time passed safely, some members, grown weary of a military posture, obtained a division of labor whereby in exchange for payments of money they were relieved of an obligation to furnish men and ships (an ancient precedent for remarkably similar division-of-labor suggestions that have come recently from Bonn). The practice spread, and the shift of most military responsibility to Athens led to the Athenian empire which itself met an unhappy end before the century was out.

Despite partial defections by France and Greece, NATO has thus far remained an effective alliance to deter a Soviet thrust into Western Europe. Still, it could yet meet the fate of that earlier alliance of democracies, if not by weakening from within, then by a way that would have seemed fanciful when NATO was formed. With Western Europe's prosperity, as with ours, came a radical shift in energy supply from domestic coal to imported oil, and this condition, when accompanied by political instability in oil-exporting countries and the relentless build-up and outward deployment of Soviet military forces, as seen thus far in the invasion of Afghanistan and the posting of a large naval force to the Indian Ocean, has created a ripening opportunity for a Soviet flanking operation which, by controlling vital oil supplies, could make NATO arms irrelevant. The fact of the opportunity—the objective situation, to use a phrase dear to Communist strategists—is a more prudent guide to the defense of the United States and its allies than subjective speculations about Soviet motives.

To meet the new situation, the industrial democracies should supplement NATO with a second mutual-defense organization, broader in membership, including Japan, and capable of restraining the Soviet Union from expanding into the region of the Persian Gulf. (A second organization would obviate difficult problems that would arise in a remaking of NATO.) NATO's supplement should be accompanied by concerted actions by the industrial democracies to conserve energy, to increase their supply from alternative sources, and to control the runaway costs of imported oil. By demonstrating the hazards of not doing these things, Mr. Podhoretz has rendered a laudable service.

PAUL R. PORTER
Reston, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have just finished reading "The Present Danger." COMMENTARY readers have seldom been treated to so revealing a discussion of the steady decline in national security. In fact, Norman Podhoretz succeeds in expressing—in stark perspective—the dissent within the intelligence community regarding long-range Soviet intentions for superiority, not parity, in arms. Estimates were bad and became progressively worse on the low side. However, the fact that most of the intelligence community could be so wrong for so long on so vital an issue means that we ought to question our ability even to understand, let alone combat, the Soviet threat.

As a result of misguided arms-control diplomacy, the U.S. today finds its defenses diminished almost to the point of inferiority. We have allowed our most serious adversary to develop without restraint the ability to destroy our deterrent forces. Thus, Soviet power and the global imbalance it creates threaten to make the 1980's a perilous decade.

This is not to imply that the situation is utterly hopeless. We have available to us a number of immediate remedies which can bring our nuclear force to near parity. These include: the acceleration of programs already under way in the research-and-development stage; the resurrection of cancelled programs like the B-1 bomber; the adoption of new technologies for existing weapons; the addition of components to existing systems; and changes in operations. All this will, in addition, confuse Soviet planners by presenting them with qualitatively different problems.

At the conventional force level the situation is somewhat different. Here, we must recognize that there are no immediate remedies; that negotiations will not be able to prevent the Soviets from continuing to sponsor local wars and to invade their neighbors; and that we will not have the capability to engage them conventionally until 1984.

Historically, the stronger of two competing nations does not allow its opponent to catch up to it. Accordingly, the patience and stamina of the United States will be severely tested as we regain strength. Only then will we once again be in control of our future and offer the hope of freedom backed by the necessary strength to assure its survival.

JOSEPH CHURBA
The Center for International Security
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found Norman Podhoretz's article concise and informative in both its historical background and in its description of the evolving expansionism motivating the Soviet Union. I share Mr. Podhoretz's fear that "sporadic outbursts of indignant energy" will continue as expressions of a confused public, looking for unwavering strength in their President and the foreign policy he dictates. In the absence of that clarity, good articles like "The Present Danger" can help make the public aware of what is needed, before it is too late.

PAUL H. NITZE
Arlington, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

When doomsday comes, the readers of COMMENTARY will have one advantage over other Americans: they won't be surprised. COMMENTARY has warned us that the Soviet Union has been overtaking the United States in all branches of weaponry, that it has been taking the lead in the nuclear race, and that it does conceive of a "winnable" nuclear war. COMMENTARY has shown us how democratic socialism is being swallowed up by the extreme Left; it has denounced the follies of Andrew Young's carryings-on in the Third World; and it has revealed that the Soviet com-

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bat brigade is indeed in Cuba for training purposes, namely, training the Cubans for an invasion of Oman. The magazine has exposed the pitfalls of SALT II; it has pointed out the feet of clay of America's allies; and it has revealed how American business is selling the Russians "the rope" with which they plan to hang us. Walter Laqueur, Edward N. Luttwak, Richard Pipes, Carl Gershman, Robert W. Tucker, Theodore Draper, Daniel P. Moynihan, Bayard Rustin, and others have conjured up enough horsemen for two apocalypses. . . .

Again and again the hopes of the COMMENTARY reader that things could not be quite so bleak as depicted in these splendidly written articles have been shattered. In the meantime, some of the controversial things first printed in COMMENTARY have become accepted truisms. Who today would challenge Richard Pipes's allegations about Soviet nuclear strategy? Just recently, ABC's *20-20* carried a report on how American technology has served the Russian weapons industry. . . .

Now, Norman Podhoretz presents us with two scenarios in which the President of the U.S. might have to choose between nuclear war and Soviet control over the oil supply. The optimistic scenario is set in Orwell's 1984, the pessimistic one right now. The President will blink —and accept Soviet control. And though Mr. Podhoretz writes in the conditional, he draws a vivid picture of what the ensuing Finlandization of America would look like.

But though "The Present Danger" shows Mr. Podhoretz's usual skill in analyzing what has brought us to our present state, he fails . . . in his attempt to end his article on an upbeat note. . . .

The reader remains with the sinking feeling that things must be very bad indeed and that it is "too late" after all. Given the accuracy of COMMENTARY's evaluations and predictions, this is a sobering thought.

BENNO WEISER VARON
Brookline, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "The Present Danger," Norman Podhoretz has performed a superb service in defining our current condition, and the choices that lie ahead of us, with respect to our national security. The article's special value at this particular juncture is, I would suggest, to show the need for a clear and commanding principle on which to form the policies and actions that comprise our foreign and security policies. "Containment," properly interpreted and applied, seems to me personally to retain its value as the major principle to govern our relations with the Soviet Union.

[Lt. Gen.] A. J. GOODPASTER
West Point, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

After conceiving and directing Freedom House . . . for more than a quarter of a century, I resigned in 1970 in a traumatic act of rebellion against the malaise which set in as a result of our failure in Vietnam. . . . COMMENTARY has been my principal source of intellectual stimulation during these years in "exile" and never was this more true than when I read "The Present Danger." . . .

If we are ever to get back on the right track as a nation, we must know where we've been and where we're going. Norman Podhoretz has helped to clarify the issues and lead the way. . . .

For me, hope has been revived, and I have no doubt that there will be many who will applaud Mr. Podhoretz's clarion call and will unite to challenge the sources of the present danger.

GEORGE FIELD
Kennett Square, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . "Is it too late?" Norman Podhoretz asks. Perhaps the healthy popular reaction to Iran and Afghanistan indicates that public-spirited nationalism is by no means dried up—just plugged up by the post-Vietnam syndrome. . . . Yet, as Mr. Podhoretz says, ". . . . the twin furies of isolationism and appeasement unleashed by our humiliating defeat in Vietnam will recover from the blows of Iran and Afghanistan." This view has already been confirmed. To take one example, Stanley Karnow, in the Washington *Star*, writes that "denying sophisticated oil-drilling equipment to the Russians may eventually prompt them to seek energy resources beyond their borders," and that "an intractable hard line will only serve to strengthen hawkish tendencies in Moscow." In short, the USSR is a power that has made up its mind what it wants and will go after it by whatever means necessary. Since some of those means might be unpleasant for us, Karnow suggests that the best policy is to help the Soviets get what they want gracefully. Back to the 1930's.

In spite of the initial protest over the events in Iran and Afghanistan, public reception of the administration's modest counter-measures was mixed, revealing flaws beneath the surface. Cutting grain and high-technology exports and boycotting the Olympics were accepted but not without outcroppings of "me-first-ism." Deployments to the Indian Ocean impose no immediate domestic inconvenience and, therefore, pass muster, but are criticized in some quarters as "excessively militaristic." Pre-draft registration has evoked sharp criticism, much of it traceable to the post-Vietnam syndrome. This is all recognized abroad. . . .

Three factors contribute to our domestic weakness. Mr. Podhoretz mentions the post-Vietnam syndrome. Perhaps the new nationalism has created a propitious moment for a simple exposition to the common man of how the tragedy of Vietnam resulted from the misconceptions and indecision of a few men—not from original sin. He also mentions the corruption of social selfishness of the "me-generation" whose members, he says, "elevate selfishness into a moral ideal" and "cannot conceive of anything worth fighting, let alone dying, for." The third factor is self-breeding inflation. . . . There is little likelihood of curing our other domestic weaknesses until inflation can be reversed. . . .

The conventional methods to halt inflation, which focus on the institutional-monetary side of the economic equation, are not working. We must also attack the production side. But so resistant is the economy to control from the conventional institutional levers that increased production would probably require a "production crusade"—a kind of New Deal in reverse. The New Deal was not very effective and must bear much of the responsibility for starting us on the course that has led to the present pass. But it gave the country a sense of direction and it regenerated our national unity, which we soon needed in World War II. . . .

Norman Podhoretz has raised the question of whether the new nationalism is in time, and he has rightly applauded the public response to the challenges of the Middle East. But, it seems to me,

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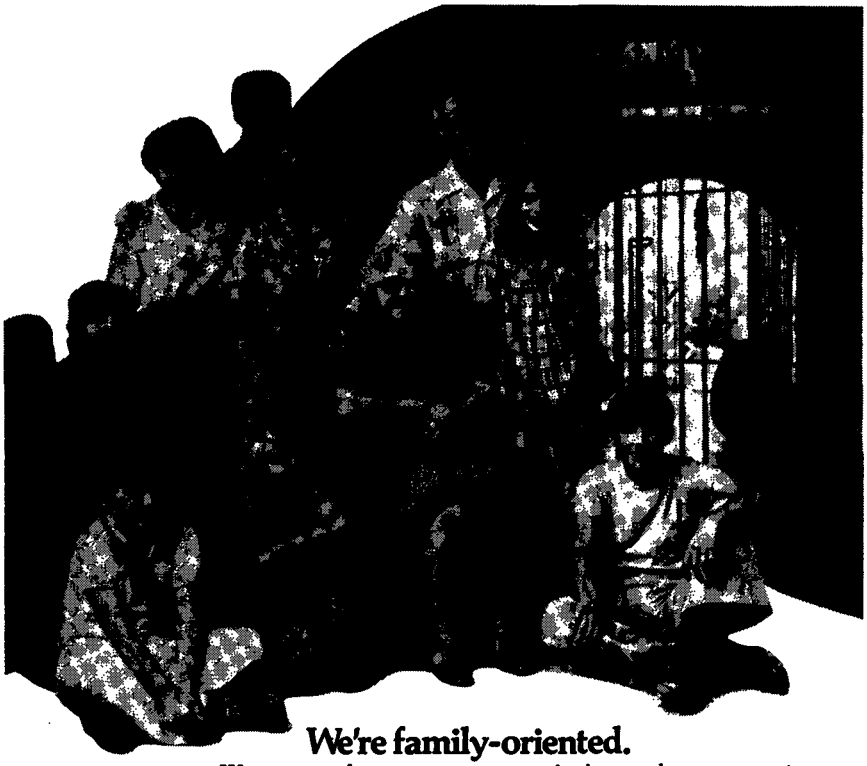

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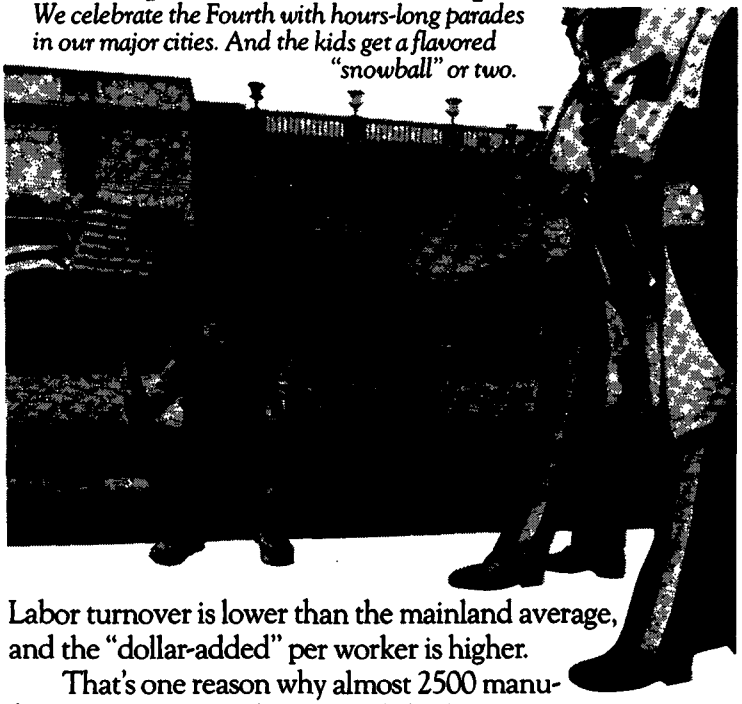

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there is something else needed as well—a regeneration of our domestic politico-socioeconomic base at home. Without this, I fear we will reach a point at which the multiplying challenges of the Soviet Union may not evoke a healthy response but will load our domestic base beyond its present capacity to bear. This, then, might propel us into a blind, fearful descent into compulsive appeasement. I hope not.

NORMAN B. HANNAH
Bethesda, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"The Present Danger" is absolutely splendid. The facts are well articulated and presented in a manner which cannot, in my opinion, be contradicted. Norman Podhoretz does the country a great service in these dangerous times. If we emerge from this crisis successfully, which I can only hope and pray we will, he will have contributed greatly to our success.

[Lt. Gen., Ret.] E. ROWNY
The Wilson Center
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's sweeping analysis of postwar American foreign policy and his ideas regarding the consequences of our present world posture deserve much praise, not because he has necessarily conceived new, untried solutions but because he has reasserted the effectiveness of an older, long abandoned one.

Just how deeply rooted the present malaise is was evident in President Carter's remark immediately after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that he had learned more about the Soviet Union in the past few weeks than in the entire tenure of his Presidency. This comment has to be one of the most remarkable statements ever made by an American President, for had it been made at any number of times in our past it quite probably would have been grounds for impeachment. To those who have followed the events of the last several years unaffected by the claptrap that emanates from the more fashionable circles of the foreign-policy establishment, the question must arise as to just what planet that establishment has been living on for the past few years.

Mr. Podhoretz is legitimately concerned that the new nationalism might prove to be only a fleeting spasm. Unless this country finds inspired leadership, the kind of leadership that tolerates nothing less than an absolute resistance to those nations dedicated to our own moral demise, then the day may not be far off when voices of Mr. Podhoretz's caliber fall not on deaf, but on frightened, ears.

JOHN J. COX
Flushing, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz should be welcomed as one of the first to call for the awakening of the West in the troubled 80's. . . . There is one aspect of Mr. Podhoretz's article, however, which needs further attention: the economic/raw material equation between East and West.

America was once the greatest economic power in the world, holding half of the globe's known resources; but this has changed drastically. Today, the USSR has the upper hand in this respect as well as in others. Thus, the USSR is almost self-sufficient in 37 basic minerals, while the U.S. and the West are almost totally dependent on imports from Third World countries. Soviet policy, therefore, is aimed at preventing these materials from freely reaching the West. . . .

About 70 to 80 per cent of the world's known mineral resources are concentrated in Siberia and Southern Africa: 99 per cent of the platinum, 98 per cent of the manganese, 97 per cent of the vanadium, 95 per cent of the chrome, 87 per cent of the diamonds, and 69 per cent of the gold. It doesn't take much imagination to see what this pattern means to the survival of the West. Western vulnerability is so great that, for example, 60 per cent of U.S. titanium is imported from the USSR (F-15's and other planes are made from titanium); West Germany gets 30 per cent of its natural gas from the USSR.

In 1978, Cuban forces invaded the Shaba province in the Congo, where most of the world's cobalt is located, and, though they were defeated, they might well try again. The Middle East is, of course, the other vital area from which half of the free world's oil comes. The Soviets are following a master plan to bring these areas under their own influence and control in order to deny the West its basic needs.

The problems confronting the West today, therefore, are not similar to those confronted by the West in the past. . . . Western options are few—and the China card is not one of them. China cannot be expected to do the West's "dirty work," both because of its weakness and its long-run Marxist-Maoist aims. Thus, the West must work for its own survival in all spheres of policy, defense, and economics.

ODED YINON
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his provocative essay, "The Present Danger," Norman Podhoretz seems to regret "the failure of the United States to take military action against OPEC in 1973-74." But he in turn fails to [note] that it was the Shah of Iran . . . who led OPEC in its demand for a fourfold increase in the cost of oil as well as subsequent increases. No one today questions the fact that our present economic woes and inflation were triggered to a large extent by this action. Since our military strength is tied to our economic well-being, the "present danger" has been caused not only by the Soviets but also by our so-called friends. The recent decision of the Saudis to keep the oil supply flowing at present levels provided we do not build up our national stockpile, so necessary in a military emergency, falls into the same category.

WALTER A. SHELDON
Lido Beach, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Perhaps the prefix "neo" should be extracted from neoconservatism. The new nationalism to which Norman Podhoretz refers in "The Present Danger" is most reminiscent of the intentions and ideology of a former American President who employed the usage of this same dictum to describe the vigor of his forthcoming administration (during the campaign of 1912). It was this same President, Theodore Roosevelt, who as Assistant Secretary of the Navy gave orders to Admiral Mahan to take an excursion into the Philippines and "scout out the situation," thus becoming the father of a misguided American imperialistic adventure, a godchild whose resurrection during this present period of American history—for whatever intended geographical application—is still considered undesirable by many Americans.

BEN ROSE
Oberlin College
Oberlin, Ohio

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I too read the remarks of George F. Kennan before a Senate committee on the Soviet "invasion" of Afghanistan. Did Norman Podhoretz and I read the same article? And if we did, by what route and on what evidence did Mr. Podhoretz make his extraordinary statements about Kennan? George Kennan has considerable credentials as an observer of the Soviet Union wholly apart from the containment controversies. His analysis of Soviet behavior seems utterly realistic. Kennan's analysis of Soviet motives, intentions, and actions can be refuted by future events. But this is not the basis of Mr. Podhoretz's crystal-ball gazing. The claim that the Soviets are inevitably expansionist is not verified so simply as Mr. Podhoretz appears to believe. Insofar as Afghanistan is concerned, this expansionist hypothesis (if not rhetoric) is grossly unsupported by even minimal evidence. There is so far no threat to Pakistan, let alone Yugoslavia. The latter nation has a history of armed resistance which alone would make Soviet policy-makers blanch; not to mention that threats to Yugoslavia, etc. would indeed shake the central balance of power and would most likely involve U.S. intervention. Such intervention (admittedly of a bargain-basement variety) was a possibility even on behalf of Afghanistan and the unpalatable General Zia of Pakistan.

The premises of Mr. Podhoretz's arguments are distortions of history and serious misreadings of "present dangers." In fact, the Soviets may well have created a problem in Afghanistan that will in the long run serve them ill. As saviors of the Third World, they now look very much like wolves in sheep's clothing. Lastly, the deductions about Soviet intentions beyond "containing" Afghanistan are gratuitous saber-rattling. . . . What will Mr. Podhoretz say if events do not bear him out?

ROBERT D. GREENSPAN
Toronto, Ontario

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Norman Podhoretz's article contains two sentences which blunt the thrust of the essay. The first, introducing his peroration, reads: "Nevertheless something is still missing from the new nationalism." A pithy statement in the abstract; its composer admires it sufficiently to yield to the temptation to repeat it, slightly altered, as he sums up on the next and final page. But all too clearly he fails to realize that it raises hopes in the reader which remain unfulfilled. Following as it does hard upon praise of the neoconservatives and his heralding the disappearance of the post-Vietnam mood, the sentence leads one to anticipate a positive contribution toward solving the foreign-policy dilemma. Instead, it turns out that what Mr. Podhoretz misses in the new nationalism (why not neonationalism?) is that it is not the same as the old nationalism. . . .

And what are we to make of the spectacle of George Kennan being pitted against George Kennan? . . . The [second] sentence alluded to above . . . reads in part: ". . . Kennan (no American chauvinist, to put it mildly) surely had in mind not any inherent virtue in the American character. . . ." But this assertion, fortified by the use of the word "surely," flies in the face of the record. . . . Anyone familiar with Kennan's most recent book, *The Cloud of Danger*, which contains a hymn to the author's pioneer Wisconsin ancestors, knows that he is an ardent believer in precisely the inherent virtue of the American character, that is, of the American character as it was then and as he still took it to be in 1947. . . .

Whatever validity lay in Kennan's assessment of the American position in his "magnificent call to containment . . . of thirty years ago" (the seeds of destruction were sown in the hubris of the war years, in my opinion), he, unlike Mr. Podhoretz, recognizes that the turbulences of three decades have consigned his brainchild to Trotsky's dust bin. Shouldn't Kennan's judgment in this matter merit respect? The denigration of "Kennan's new defeatism" in Mr. Podhoretz's last sentence, and indeed his peroration as a whole, serves to detract from rather than to enhance the new nationalism. . . .

R. E. STEUSSY
Eugene, Oregon

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

In preparing a revised and expanded version of "The Present Danger" for publication as a book (Simon and Schuster will be bringing it out in July), I profited from and was encouraged by the letters printed above and the many others I received for which, unfortunately, space could not be found. Here let me restrict myself to an additional word about George F. Kennan, in whose defense Robert D. Greenspan and R. E. Steussy write.

Indeed, Mr. Greenspan and I did not "read the same article" by Kennan. The piece I was talking about appeared on the op-ed page of the New York *Times* on February 1, 1980; he is talking about Kennan's testimony before a Senate committee. Be that as it may, it is hard to know what evidence of Soviet expansionism would satisfy Mr. Greenspan, who puts quotation marks around the word invasion in speaking of the dispatch of a hundred thousand Soviet troops into Afghanistan. Nevertheless, if Mr. Greenspan really is looking for evidence, I would offer him the same advice I offered Kennan in "The Present Danger"—to read Kennan's own classic article of 1947, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." For a more up-to-date spelling out of the evidence, I can refer him to Richard Pipes's article, "Soviet Global Strategy," in the April COMMENTARY.

Mr. Steussy seems to think that Kennan needs to be defended against my statement that he is not an American chauvinist. If so, I would wish to defend Kennan against his defender. But on the question of the virtues of the American character, I agree with Mr. Steussy that Kennan believes this country once stood for something good and that it no longer does so. It is, in my opinion, precisely because he thinks that the United States has nothing of any value to give to the rest of the world that he has "consigned his brainchild to Trotsky's dust bin," and not because the "evidence" of Soviet conduct since 1947 has persuaded him that he was wrong about Soviet expansionism.

"Shouldn't Kennan's judgment in this matter merit respect?" Mr. Steussy asks. The answer is no. The United States, whatever its faults, continues to stand for a system which offers more freedom, more equality, and more prosperity to more of its people than any other the world has known. The Soviet Union still poses, in Kennan's words of 1947, an "implacable challenge" to the institutions which have made those blessings possible. The Soviet Union also continues to embody a totalitarian alternative which has brought political tyranny, economic misery, and cultural barbarism to the people forced to live

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under it. And it still remains the case that only American power can "contain" the malignant spread of that totalitarian alternative over an ever wider portion of the earth.

What Kennan had to say about all this was sound in 1947 and is in some respects even truer today when the Soviets have grown so much stronger in relation to the United States than they were thirty years ago. His judgment then merited, and merits, respect; his judgment today—tragically for all of us, given the influence he continues to exert on our political culture—does not.

IQ Tests

To the Editor of Commentary:

R. J. Herrnstein's article, "In Defense of Intelligence Tests" [February], is the best discussion of the IQ testing controversy that I have yet seen in any popular publication. One technical point he raises struck me; this concerns his paraphrase of Arthur Jensen's argument that a substantial degree of genetic determination of intelligence implies that "individual differences in *scholastic achievement* [are] *bound* to be relatively hard, though not necessarily impossible, to improve by simple remedies." This is a courageous effort to summarize a very complicated matter in simple language. I would like, if I may, to expand upon this because it is widely misrepresented to the public, and its implications are central to any sensible discussion of IQ and educational policy.

The degree of a trait's genetic determination is measured by what geneticists call its "heritability," which is an index of how much of a trait's deviation from the average value can be attributed to environment. . . . High heritability for IQ means that the spread in IQ's can be attributed only in a modest degree to the existing spread in environments. There are three vital points to understand about this in drawing implications for policy:

1. A finding of high IQ heritability means that overall variations in IQ cannot be significantly reduced by means of narrowing environmental variability to the average, that is, middle-class, environment. Since extending the middle-class cultural milieu to every child is the explicit motive behind most efforts at compensatory education, high IQ heritability does predict the lack of success of this kind of program, though not necessarily of all kinds, in reducing overall IQ and achievement differences. This does not mean that such programs should not be undertaken on other grounds. But it is foolish to justify them in terms of their supposedly beneficial effects on IQ.

2. How heritable a trait will appear is critically dependent upon the particular environmental background against which it is measured. The same trait may appear highly heritable in one set of environmental circumstances and only weakly so in another. Thus the judgment that IQ can be influenced only minimally by environmental factors strictly applies only to the kinds of environmental variation that are already common. This does not foreclose the possibility of discovering new types of treatments that could raise IQ. Rather than implying the necessary futility of all efforts aimed at improving IQ, then, high IQ heritability suggests redirecting those efforts to examine novel forms of intervention.

3. The heritability statistics are inferred as an average for an entire population and hence may conceal rare instances where IQ is being greatly influenced by existing environmental factors. Thus high overall IQ heritability should not discourage the search among exceptional situations for potent environmental agents that, once identified, could be made the basis of deliberate remedial policies. Conversely, finding such occasional instances (and the popular literature is filled with claims of this nature) should not be interpreted as disproving high IQ heritability; as long as these instances are rare and concern only small numbers of children, they cannot invalidate the overall finding.

In sum, a substantial degree of genetic determination of IQ differences does not quite mean that remedies are bound to be "hard" rather than "simple," but it does mean that those remedies cannot be based simple-mindedly upon equalizing environments to the middle-class norm. There may be remedies for low IQ, but we will have to look for them among novel inno-

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vations or now rare environmental circumstances. I agree it will probably be hard to discover what these might be. But once we understood them, they might be simple to apply.

WILLIAM R. HAVENDER
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

R. J. Herrnstein's article is considerably more reasoned and more temperate than the usual outpourings of the contemporary hereditarian school of psychologists. Nevertheless, several flaws limit his persuasiveness.

For example, Mr. Herrnstein handles the late Cyril Burt with remarkable gentleness. Kamin and Dorfman have demonstrated that over a period of many years Burt's work was systematically fraudulent. Therefore, Burt's results must be suspect, except for those that have been thoroughly and independently checked by other, more reliable investigators.

Mr. Herrnstein handles the statistical and genetic parameters of heritability rather cavalierly. As Lewontin and others have pointed out, heritability is useful under certain conditions in determining the genetic component in the phenotypes of a single population. But using this parameter to compare different populations, or different races, is an invalid procedure.

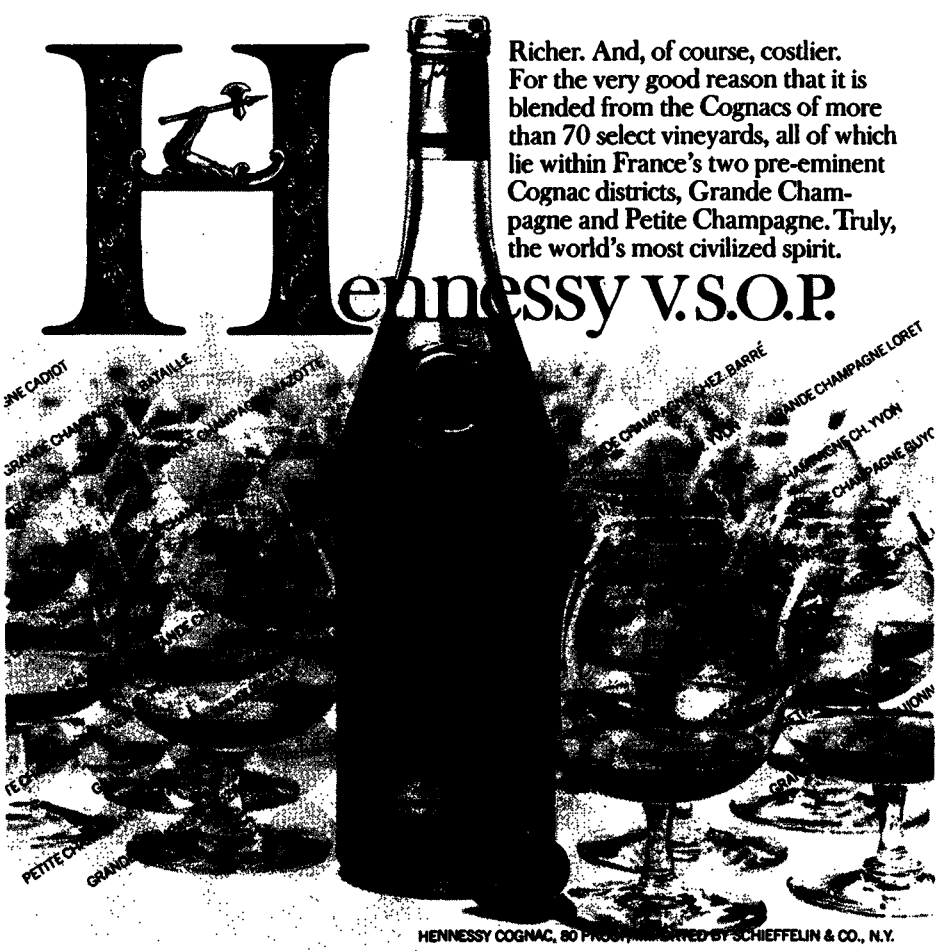
The example of a verbal analogy that Mr. Herrnstein cites, "Fish is to scales as dog is to: lap; skin; fur; bite," would frustrate anybody with enough "g" to have picked up some biology in the course of his life. What is supposed to be the correct answer: skin? fur? Actually there is no correct answer among the choices given. Scales, like fur and hair, are outgrowths of the skin. Hair would be the correct answer. But while dogs have hair, they don't have fur. As Banesh Hoffman has noted, knowing too much can kill you on an intelligence test.

There are other lapses in the article. But these should suffice to suggest that Mr. Herrnstein has been a little careless. Nevertheless, I was glad to see Mr. Herrnstein's lists of *dos* and *don'ts*, especially "Don't . . . draw firm conclusions about the origins of the average difference between the races in intelligence-score tests."

STANLEY L. WEINBERG
Ottumwa, Iowa

R. J. HERRNSTEIN writes:

William R. Havender's letter enlarges usefully on several points I glossed over in my article. I'm glad to see it published, for what the heritability of IQ means usually gets less attention than the controversy surrounding it. I think Stanley L. Weinberg is saying something similar about heritability, but he also chides me for confusing fur and hair. I would gladly grant my error if I had really made one, but as far as I can tell from various references, fur is the soft hair of certain animals, such as dog, fox, beaver, or cat. The right answer to my made-up item was "fur," and if Mr. Weinberg got it wrong, it was probably not because he knows too much. In fact, items on the major intelligence tests are validated in standardizing procedures making it unlikely that anyone is penalized for being especially bright or knowledgeable. Finally, I treated Cyril Burt gently because nothing I have seen calls for anything less. The data from his later years are now in doubt, as I said in my article, but he remains a major early contributor to psychological measurement. To deny him that is unjust and unjustified.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Korah's Revolt

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

By casting Korah in the guise of a religious hero and martyr, Robert J. Milch ["Korah's Revolt," February] has tried to give the modern rebel against the *halakhic* system and Jewish authority a foothold in traditional Judaism. Such a foothold, however, is not there to be had. A heroic vision of Korah is not borne out by biblical texts, commentaries, or tradition. In fact, Korah's revolt is seen as the archetype of feigned altruism: "And which controversy had no noble purpose? The controversy of Korah and his company" (*Pirke Avot* V:20). History, too, denies the dura-

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bility of brands of Judaism that have done away with *Halakhah* and its authority.

As Mr. Milch rightly points out, religious and political rebellion are not readily separable. If Korah saw himself as a Levite deprived of his ancestral rights, his sudden egalitarianism and scorn for authority sound much more like sour grapes than religious zeal.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, in his article, "The First Rebellion Against Torah Authority" (*Shiurei Harav*, 1974), identifies two distinct strains of complaints voiced by Korah: resentment toward authority—as personified by Moses; and, perhaps more crucial, resentment toward a specific system of *Halakhah*, or structure, for Jewish life.

The Midrash relates that Korah and his congregation came before Moses dressed in blue garments that required *tzitzit*, or fringes. Does a garment that is all blue still require a blue fringe? they asked. Yes, answered Moses. They jeered, and asked him another question: must a house that is full of Torah scrolls have a *mezuzah*—a parchment with particular biblical passages written on it—affixed to the door? Yes, Moses answered again, and again they jeered.

Mr. Milch's psychoanalytic treatment of the Midrash manages to miss its point. What the Midrash is getting at is the nature of the relationship between theory and the individual actions involved in *Halakhah*, and the relationship between the Jewish community and authority. The two *Halakhot* the Midrash chooses to illustrate these relationships—*tzitzit* and *mezuzah*—are binding upon individuals. They cannot be performed by proxy or by the general community. *Tzitzit* worn against a man's body and the *mezuzah* that a person attaches to the door of his house show the recognition of God's presence in regular, workaday life. This binding of the individual to God . . . is inherent in all of *Halakhah*.

The Midrash explores this relationship through the issue of content as opposed to structure. "If we have grasped the meat of a theory—the blue color of the garment, the Torah scrolls that fill a house—what need do we have for the particulars of the *Halakhah*?" Korah was asking. Moses saw a pressing need: the focus in Judaism is on individual actions because action is the filter of ideology. The *Halakhah* is the meeting point between theory and practice in the Jewish scheme of things, and the actions prescribed by the *Halakhah* are the clothes that theory wears in order to have an impact on people's lives.

The metaphors of *tzitzit* and *mezuzah* also address the relationship between community and authority. Just as the blue garment is not complete without its blue fringe and the house full of Torah scrolls is not fit for living in without its *mezuzah*, the Jewish community is not complete or focused without a source of authority—teachers—as well. For the primary function of the Jewish leader is to teach, and thus to lead. But the leader is contingent on his people in the same way that the blue fringe's value is contingent on the garment and the functional quality of the *mezuzah* is only present when it is affixed to a house.

Mr. Milch's article raises one of the basic problems in Jewish life today: can commitment to and involvement in a Jewish way of life come about without commitment to *Halakhah*—and its authority? The answer in Moses' day was no. The answer today is the same.

ADINA KLAHR

Lawrence, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a direct descendant of Aaron, I suppose I should take exception to Robert J. Milch's attempt to rehabilitate the Levite Korah. After all, Korah tried to crack our monopoly of the sacred service until the LORD made it terminally plain, to him and any bystanders with similar notions, that they were on the wrong track. That he should now be getting a sympathetic press after centuries of midrashic animadversion may be alarming to some, but the process was already under way in Deuteronomy. In its reference to the uprising, this book pointedly omits the name of Korah from the cast of villains, although he got top billing the first time around. In fact, Deuteronomy tends to play down the role of the high priests, urging all Israel to be a na-

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tion of priests, which was Korah's position all along (Numbers 16:3). The LORD does not change, but times do. It may be a risky thing to say in an area where the earth is constantly threatening to open up, but I do not hold it against Korah —or his apologist—for daring to suggest that ancient dicta may be subject to humanistic review.

ALBERT L. REINER
Greenbrae, California

ROBERT MILCH writes:

Adina Klahr agrees with my appraisal of Korah's position on the *mitzvot* pertaining to the blue fringe and the *mezuzah*, and she also agrees that the real issue was authority and not the specific commandments that he challenged. Her response to this, however, is somewhat circular and, in addition, highly selective in its treatment of the evidence, for she validates authority by appealing to authority, and she pulls this off by ignoring what Korah had to say about various other laws that do not fit into her schema—most especially the *mitzvot* involved in the case of the impoverished widow—and by failing to deal with the present-day manifestations of the issue that were mentioned in my article.

While it is possible to maintain that certain *mitzvot*, essentially value-free and abstract, have no humanly ascertainable purpose and exist only to be obeyed, Korah apparently held that such a cavalier view cannot be taken with respect to commandments whose purpose is evident, especially when legalistic emphasis on their form, rather than their content, may be detrimental to the quality of the observant Jew's everyday life. Even if Korah were pursuing his own interests in raising this issue, it is still a serious problem. The gravity of the problem becomes even more apparent when it is recalled, as I pointed out, that in this respect Korah may have been a mouthpiece for concerns felt by the same sages who were creating the elaborate *halakhic* legal system, although they were simply setting him up as a straw man to be refuted and discredited.

The attitude of the sages to Korah is quite ambivalent, and the unattributed saying from *Pirke Avot* cited by Miss Klahr may not mean what she suggests. The passage says that "controversies in the name of heaven will in the end be established, and controversies not in the name of heaven will not be established," which is more or less the same as saying that only time will tell. Admittedly the passage mentions Korah's controversy as an example of the second category, but since we are not yet at "the end," and human history is still in progress, this is hardly an absolute dictum but simply a subjective judgment reflecting the view of Korah current at the time that *Pirke Avot* was compiled.

According to R. Travers Herford, in his commentary on *Pirke Avot*, the author of this saying may well have been Rabban Gamaliel the Elder, who is quoted in the New Testament as having said much the same thing about the early Christians: "For if this idea of theirs is of human origin . . . it will collapse; but if it is from God, you will never be able to put them down" (Acts 5:38-39). Undoubtedly Gamaliel expected Christianity to die out, but if he were to come back today, and discover that it has flourished for the past two thousand years, surely he would not conclude, on this account, that Peter was right and he was wrong. By the same token, taking the passage in *Pirke Avot* as embodying a pragmatic rule of thumb to be followed in regard to differences of opinion, it cannot be claimed that the traditional view of Korah is necessarily correct simply because it has prevailed for an equally long time.

Argentina & the B'nai B'rith

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The following is a letter I sent on behalf of B'nai B'rith International to the Ambassador of the Argentine Republic, Jorge A. Aja Espil, in reference to an advertisement by the government of Argentina that appeared in COMMENTARY [April] as well as in other publications:

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

Mr. Jack Spitzer, president of B'nai B'rith International, is on an overseas trip and I am, therefore, writing to you on his behalf as well as on behalf of B'nai B'rith International, that we were shocked to find Mr. Spitzer's name in an advertisement that was placed by the Argentine government in a number of major national publications.

The usual practice requires advance clearance with a person whose

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name is to appear in a commercial advertisement. The use of Mr. Spitzer's name is the cause of great embarrassment to both Mr. Spitzer and B'nai B'rith International. The problem is compounded by the fact that his title is distorted. Mr. Spitzer is the president of B'nai B'rith International, which incorporates the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. He is not the president of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Further, the advertisement suggests that Mr. Spitzer was an official guest of the Argentine government and suggests inferentially that he supports the policies of that government. As you know from conversations held between B'nai B'rith and yourself, as well as other leaders of the Argentine government, we are most concerned about violations of human rights in Argentina. Until the present anguish in Argentina is relieved, we would not want to associate ourselves with a testimonial to your government's policies.

I am afraid that at this point the damage has been done and I would ask formally that you cease in any further use of Mr. Spitzer's name, or the name of B'nai B'rith International, or the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. I would also suggest that it would be appropriate to have an apology sent to Mr. Spitzer for the unauthorized use of his name as well as our organization's name.

May I strongly request that a correction appear under your sponsorship in all publications where the original advertisement appeared.

DANIEL THURSZ
Executive Vice President
B'nai B'rith International
Washington, D.C.

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am grateful for Jonathan D. Sarna's long and thoughtful review of my book, *Merchant Princes* [Books in Review, March], and thank him for his generous comments that I "paint endlessly fascinating portraits" and present "lively vignettes [that] are well chosen."

I write to correct one thing and one thing only, which, . . . I believe, is a misimpression your readers might derive from the review. Mr. Sarna states that each of the families I write about "lost control of its empire," and that the later "generations of children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren" have proved "weak, powerless, and morally debauched." Of some this is true. Of most it is not. In fact, most of the heirs of my generation and later are not the sort of sad *ratés* Mr. Sarna describes, and I did not say in my book that they were.

LEON HARRIS
Dallas, Texas

JONATHAN D. SARNA writes:

I have no doubt that most of the heirs of Leon Harris's generation are fully honorable men. *Merchant Princes*, however, is not about most of those heirs; it is only about a few of them. If they are unrepresentative, I am hardly to blame.

The New Class

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I enjoyed reading Arch Puddington's review of John Kenneth Galbraith's *Annals of an Abiding Liberal* [Books in Review, March]. Mr. Puddington scores some telling points. It is good to see that the pro-labor brand of social democracy still finds vigorous expression in COMMENTARY. To be exact, it is good to see Galbraith's plan for nationalization of industry criticized, not because it would violate the "free-market basis of a free society," . . . but because workers would be excluded from participation in running the nationalized industries.

However, I fear Mr. Puddington involves himself in an intriguing contradiction. He indicates that Galbraith wants to have the New Class take over industry via "public" ownership. But from this scanty evidence he comes to the conclusion (in his final sentence) that ". . . Galbraith is the ideological spokesman for a class [the New Class] . . . which has a good deal of power, and wants much more." The point is apparently that the New Class wants socialism in order to realize its power ambitions. But while it is clear that such is Galbraith's desire, it is not clear that Galbraith accurately reflects the de-

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sires of the New Class. Mr. Puddington himself says that Galbraith does *not* share the New Politics/McGovernite position (which Mr. Puddington equates with the New Class position) favoring "decentralized, 'participatory' socialism," namely, workers' codetermination and "other models of industrial power-sharing." It is not at all clear to me from the available survey data (see my "Neoconservatives and the Defense of Capitalism" in the Jan.-Feb. 1980 *Worldview*) that this is indeed what the New Class wants. But what is clear is that Mr. Puddington can be heard to say that Galbraith wants all power to the New Class, but the New Class does not want what Galbraith wants, since it actually wants the capitalists' hegemony over industrial power broken and shared with workers —and presumably the public (whether nationalization is required here is unclear). So, Mr. Puddington undercuts his own conclusion.

Since the New Class is already heavily involved in industry—both inside the major corporations and the regulatory apparatus—the big gainers in "industrial power-sharing" could turn out to be not the New Class but the working class and the general public. If this is what the New Class wants—a big "if"—it comes out looking less malevolent than Galbraith (inadvertently) pictures it.

Galbraith's elitist "socialism" runs so strongly against the democratic American grain as to be virtually self-condemning. If John Kenneth Galbraith did not exist he would have to be invented by the defenders of corporate power. The interesting question here is not what Galbraith or other self-appointed spokesmen for the New Class want, but what the (empirical) New Class itself wants.

DALE VREE
New Oxford Review
Oakland, California

ARCH PUDDINGTON writes:

I appreciate Dale Vree's comments on my review of *Annals of an Abiding Liberal,* but I do not think they are particularly relevant to the major points of my argument. In any political movement or tendency there are bound to be differences over specific issues and especially over strategic questions. Some American trade unionists are open to the idea of codetermination-type arrangements of industrial power-sharing; others strongly prefer the traditional adversary relationship between labor and management. Within John Kenneth Galbraith's educational and scientific stratum there are similar differences. Some believe that large corporations should be broken up and operated as community-based and community-controlled enterprises with management prerogatives taken from private hands and given over to representatives of various constituency groups: minorities, feminists, environmentalists, consumers, and workers. Others, Galbraith included, consider such proposals utopian and unworkable; they are willing to come to terms with the giant corporation as long as it is "publicly" controlled.

Whatever their differences may be, however, the various spokesmen for the educational and scientific stratum do agree on one point: responsibility for the governance of the large corporation should be relegated to members of their own class, or tendency. Some would reserve a role (but not the dominant role) in the corporate governance structure for representatives of the workers; others, such as Galbraith, would exclude unions altogether. No one, however, is proposing that corporations be governed on the European codetermination model, in which unions and management (but *only* unions and management) sit together on corporate boards and determine policy.

The reason for the relatively minimal role proposed for unions is not simply that the various spokesmen for the New Class want to reserve all power for themselves, although this, indeed, is a factor. More important is the view, held by Galbraith and Ralph Nader among others, that unions are insufficiently attuned to the "public good" to be trusted with running, or helping to run, large industrial enterprises. Unions and their members, after all, have a profound stake in the success and growth of the corporation. With expansion comes more jobs; with success in the marketplace comes the possibility of higher wages.

On the other hand, those not directly employed by the corporation—especially environmentalists and consumerists—have no abiding stake in the performance of the corporation. Indeed, those who are most insistently clamoring for a role in the direction of the corporation are often overtly hostile to economic growth, the concept of the large corporation, technological innovation, and the like. Although their conception of the public interest is no doubt sincerely motivated, I feel certain that their goals, translated into corporate policy, would inevitably clash with the needs of the workers and quite probably those of the ordinary consumer as well.

The debate over the role of the corporation and its power will be a crucial one in the next decade; even conservative supporters of the current corporate governing arrangements predict that changes in the current structure are inevitable. It is important to approach this debate with an open mind; this means, however, recognizing the underlying objectives of those demanding the changes and a careful and critical scrutiny of proposals wrapped in the mantle of the "public interest."

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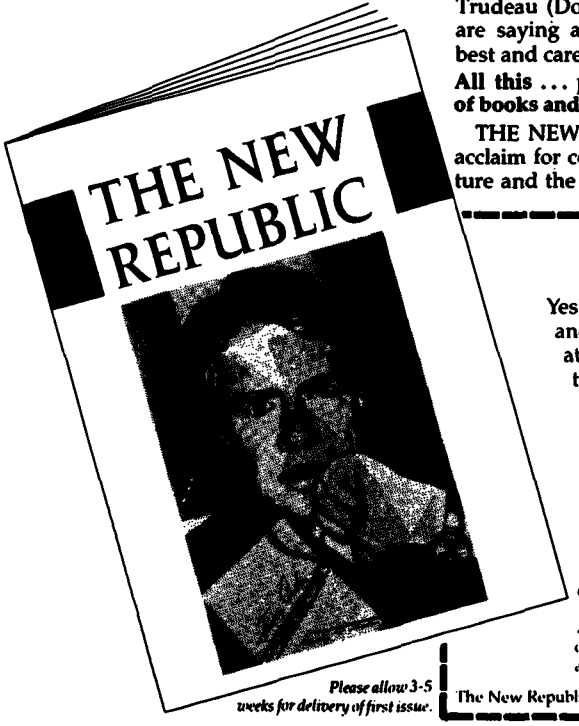

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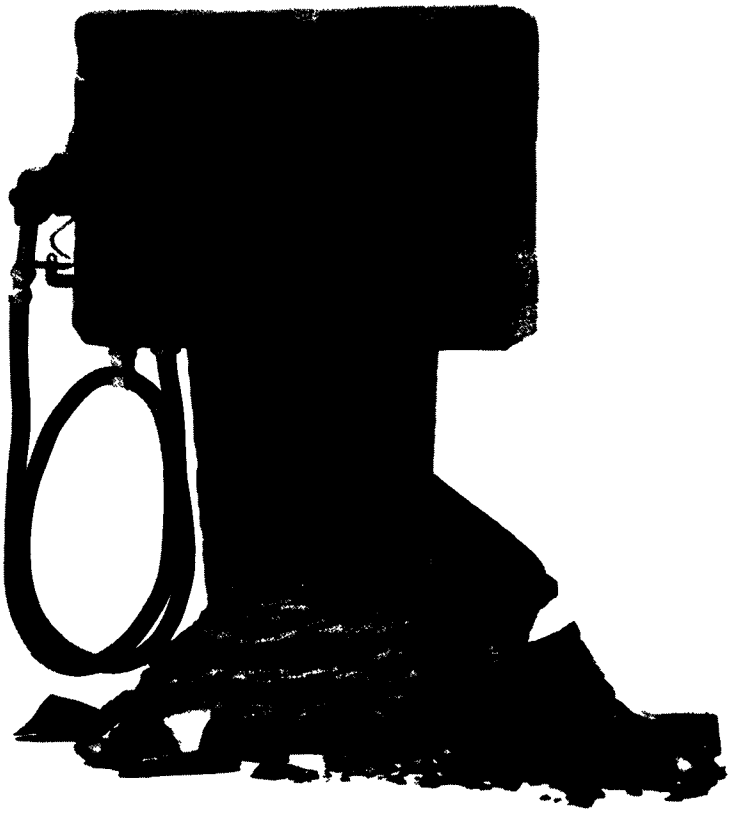

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Euro-Neutralism

Walter Laqueur

NO COUNTRY is entirely the master of its own fate, not even the Soviet Union or the United States. But there are degrees and degrees of dependence (just as there are degrees of freedom of action), and Europe's decline in this respect has been striking. Self-Finlandization, the voluntary subordination of the European political order to the interests and wishes of the Soviet Union, has made considerable advances in recent years. The process goes on sometimes quite openly, without any attempt to embellish the true state of affairs, while at other times it assumes the guise of an "independent policy" or a "third way." The acrimonious exchanges between European governments and Washington over the handling of the Iran crisis, and the palpable sense of disappointment with Europe that one sees and hears in much American talk and writing, are all symptoms of this process. The question now is how far it is likely to go.

The general phenomenon of dependence is hardly new. As long as there have been states, the smaller and weaker have adjusted themselves to the wishes of the big and powerful. Such accommodation has ranged from the mere taking care not to offend one's larger neighbor on issues of major importance, to total satellization, with many stages in between.

An intricate client system existed in Roman times. Rome was by no means out to humiliate its foreign client-princes—on the contrary, they were treated as friends and allies, and some were even granted Roman citizenship. As long as Rome trusted its "allies," it did not interfere in their domestic policies. But decisions about war and peace were made only by the Roman Senate. A client could neither make war nor conclude peace, and if he received an invitation to visit Rome, he would have been ill-advised to postpone his arrival. Clients volunteered their help in time of war even though nowhere in the treaties was automatic assistance so much as mentioned; it was obvious what would happen if they hesitated or refused.

Another interesting example of institutional dependence was created by the British, or to be precise the East India Company, in the 18th century. Britain had neither the manpower nor the means for the physical conquest and permanent administration of the whole subcontinent. It preferred indirect rule. Like the clients of Rome, the maharajas of Hyderabad, Mysore, and Jodhpur were not subjects but allies of Britain. They had small armies and in principle were under no obligation to accept the advice of the British political officers residing at their courts. Some of them, in fact, supported the Congress movement in later years, a policy hardly welcome to the British authorities in New Delhi.

This form of dependence is at present more typical of the relationship between Moscow and Eastern Europe than of that between Moscow and Western Europe. But already the relation between the latter is no longer one of equals: would the Europeans dare prescribe to the Soviets—as the Soviets do to them—what weapons they may or may not deploy, or threaten the Soviet Union with reprisals if Moscow failed to comply with European demands? With the change in the balance of power (real or perceived) and the internal division and the weakness of Western Europe (real or imaginary), the East European model or something like it may well be the wave of the future.

Such a new relationship ("a higher stage of détente"), more subtle than what already obtains between the Soviet Union and Finland, would amount to undeclared neutralism (rather than, as in the Finnish case, neutrality sanctioned in a treaty). The West European countries would not be asked to leave NATO, provided they accepted the fact that Soviet military predominance had come to stay and made no attempt to restore the balance. Europe would also have to accept the Soviet interpretation of détente as binding—which would mean, among other things, that events in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East could not be permitted to affect the state of affairs in Europe. In addition, there would occur an intensification of trade relations with the Soviet Union, meaning more loans, credits, and transfer of technology. Finally, no Western European opposition would

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be forthcoming to major Soviet foreign-policy initiatives, and there would be no adverse comments concerning Soviet domestic affairs—in other words, self-censorship.

As for the Soviet Union, it would not directly interfere in the internal affairs of Western Europe except if there were a danger of political parties and leaders coming to power who might give less than wholehearted support to the new relationship. Under such circumstances, the Soviet Union would have not only the right but the duty to exert heavy political pressure.

There would be no need to spell all this out in great detail. European leaders have enough political intelligence to behave according to the ground rules without being given precise explanations and instructions. Indeed, this arrangement is not only a possibility; in some respects it is already a reality, as a tour of the European horizon quickly reveals.

FOR many years now France has been Europe's Achilles heel. Other governments have made a shibboleth of national egotism, interpreted in the most narrow and ultimately self-defeating way, but nowhere else has it been accompanied by so much rhetorical humbug. We have heard of France's civilizing mission, its high status in world affairs, the wholly disinterested character of its foreign policy: alone among the nations it has always been willing to help when the cause of liberty has been in danger. This kind of rhetoric has been part of French political life for a long time, and no one has ever taken it wholly seriously. But the discrepancy between the noble phrases and the reality has hardly ever been so glaring.

No other country has insisted so much as France on an independent European policy, and none has done so much to sabotage it. Underlying the post-Gaullist phraseology there has been, more often than not, the mentality of Vichy, with national pride and superior political wisdom serving as a cloak for the anxiety and the defeatism which spread in Paris whenever a cold wind blows from the East or when oil-producing countries make threatening noises.

But what about France's independent deterrent, its nuclear artillery and submarines, its silos in the massif of Albion? The Soviets, for one, have never taken these quite seriously—and rightly so. It is the moral fiber and the determination of the leadership that count, not the number of divisions and their equipment. There was something rotten in France in 1940 (when the French army, contrary to widespread belief, was not that weak), and there is something rotten now.

For in what other democratic society could the leadership of a major party act with such open cynicism as do the French Communists, and get away with it? Some have talked of a "surprising re-Stalinization" of the party, as if it had ever been *de*-Stalinized except in the dream world of some American political scientists. Actually, the Communists and Giscard d'Estaing have an overriding common interest—to prevent a union of the Left. Barring some totally unforeseen development, Giscard will be reelected president next year, and the price to be paid will be that he do nothing to offend the Soviets. Neither the Communist leader Georges Marchais nor the Kremlin will care if this arrangement is dressed up as a proud manifestation of French independence.

No one can fairly accuse the French of a lack of talent or intelligence. Perhaps—beyond the incomprehensible actions of the present leadership—there may be a deeper wisdom, a farsighted statesmanship, a sobriety, the true value of which will prove itself only in years to come? Alas, there is nothing of the sort, only cynicism, the perspicacity of the small shopkeeper bereft of his common sense, and the rationalization of weakness. True, there have been signs of revival, and there are such signs even now, but these are as yet minority views which have not made a decisive mark on French politics.

BRITAIN has shown more solidarity with Washington than most other European nations, but this, unfortunately, is not saying very much. Economically, Britain is steadily falling behind the rest of Europe. Its weaknesses have reemerged with a vengeance after a partial and temporary recovery during the last years of Labor's rule, and this despite the flow of North Sea oil. The outlook for the period ahead is grim. A country poor in resources, Britain depends largely on foreign trade, yet it is losing its ability to compete in world markets. Mrs. Thatcher's rise to power was accompanied by great expectations in some quarters in Washington, but the achievements of the Tory government have been few. (There could have been no lasting achievements without far-reaching changes in public attitudes, which should have been clear from the beginning but was not.) Meanwhile, the Labor party, manipulated by a relatively small but determined group of militants, has moved to the Left.

The term "Left" in this context is invoked in conformity with common usage, which lags behind events by several decades. There is nothing particularly left-wing or radical about those who now dominate the counsels of the Labor party or about their attitudes: protectionism, anti-Europeanism, a siege mentality leading to a siege economics and ultimately to a siege politics. A Labor party of this kind has little chance of attaining power even though the polls may today show it ahead of the Tories. But a Labor party permanently in opposition only means a deepened polarization, more frustration, more strikes both official and wildcat, greater lawlessness, and a further weakening of the authority of democratic institutions.

In Italy, if there has been no visible improve-

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ment, there has been no marked deterioration either. A state of affairs which many thought could not possibly endure has in fact persisted, and for the time being the worst has not happened.

Spain has been one of the few success stories of the 1970's, but of late the situation there has taken a turn for the worse. After a remarkably smooth transition from dictatorship to democracy, a negative mood has spread, expressing itself on the one hand in apathy and on the other in a growing dissatisfaction with political institutions, in the growth of regionalism and the proliferation of political parties. The ruling Christian Democrats garnered only one-tenth of the vote in the elections in the most highly industrialized parts of the country; but the Socialists, the main opposition party, also lost votes. Spanish industry has been hit harder than any other in Europe by the rise of oil prices. There is now little new investment and 10 per-cent unemployment; most of the unemployed are young workers. Terrorism contributes to the erosion of the legitimacy of the state. It is financed and supported from abroad (Libya and Algeria), and the French authorities have been less than helpful in combating the ETA on their side of the border.

ABOVE ALL, however, it is Germany which counts. For the last two decades it has been the most stable force on the continent, and even now Helmut Schmidt's government is the only one which continues to be reasonably effective and popular. According to present indications, the Social Democrats should have no difficulty winning the elections in October. There is one cloud on the political horizon: the ecologists (the "Greens") have had some regional breakthroughs, and some think they might repeat their success nationwide. At their recent convention, however, they made the mistake of spelling out their political program in complete detail, and as a result they will probably lose the support of those sympathizers who do not subscribe to New Left doctrine.

Yet with all this there have been disquieting signs out of Germany. Some of the elder statesmen of the Social Democratic party, notably Willy Brandt, Herbert Wehner, and Egon Bahr, while reaffirming their loyalty to the Western alliance, have veered toward some form of neutralism. The young Socialists, the Jusos, who constitute perhaps up to a third of the party activists, have gone even further. They supported the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan with greater enthusiasm than did some West European Communist parties—which, however cautiously, dissociated themselves from the Soviet action.

It has been fascinating to watch the change in the outlook of Wehner, Brandt, and their colleagues, precisely because, unlike some Western liberals, they have few illusions about Communism and the Soviet Union. (Wehner was a leading Communist up to the early 1940's, while Brandt was in the forefront of the battle against the Communists as chief Burgomaster of Berlin.) Could the rapprochement they now advocate be connected with the hope of achieving an all-German confederation? Perhaps, to some extent. But far more important seems to be the impact on these men of the change in the balance of power in Europe. The Soviet Union, as they see it, has become the leading force in Europe, and West Germany has to accept the fact. Under no circumstances must it be forced into a conflict with its powerful neighbor. If Germany remains reasonably strong and prosperous, they believe, it will have little to fear from Moscow.

With certain reservations, Brandt and Wehner support NATO, for they know that without American help Germany would not be able to resist Soviet pressure for long. But they oppose attempts to extend allied solidarity outside Europe; and to make German participation in NATO palatable to the Russians, they also want Germany to be the Western country most conciliatory toward the Soviet Union.

It could be said in defense of such ideas that the overall perspective from Hamburg—a distance of 30 miles from Soviet forward units—let alone from Berlin, is not the same as from Washington. As Brandt and Wehner see it, Germans will always have to be more accommodating toward the Soviet Union in view of their geographical proximity, their traditional trade relations, and, of course, their relationship with East Germany.

This view does not lack a certain plausibility, but it is based on weak premises: Germany needs the U.S. much more than the U.S. needs Germany. Without the support of the alliance, Germany would be directly exposed to Soviet pressure. Good relations with the Soviet bloc may be desirable but the American umbrella is essential; without it, there is no future for *Ostpolitik*. In fact, the Germans have it backward. If NATO in Europe were stronger than it is, a certain amount of German *Alleingänge* (solo runs) would not necessarily be fatal to the alliance; in view of the weakness of NATO, they would almost certainly lead to its collapse. Chancellor Schmidt, a sensible man, is aware of the dilemma. And yet in an unfortunate speech he said that "We cannot afford gestures of strength and we are sick and tired of demonstrating that we are vigorous and imperturbable." Also, probably as a concession to the left wing of his party, he suggested a temporary halt in the deployment of missiles in Europe. Reasonable as this may sound, it amounts to the perpetuation of the Soviet military advantage in Europe—the root cause of the present imbalance and of the crisis in détente.

NO ONE in Europe expects a military attack on the central front. Soviet policy in Central Europe is to make the most of

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the cleavages and conflicts among the Western allies and wherever possible to deepen them. The two critical areas in Europe are the north—Scandinavia, to which Holland could be added—and the southern flank.

There has been growing Soviet pressure in Scandinavia, in a way that may well foreshadow a new pattern. The Soviet Union has built up the Kola peninsula as a major naval and strategic-nuclear missile base. Soviet naval units are permanently found on a line reaching from Iceland to the Shetlands and the Faroe Islands. Soviet naval maneuvers leave little doubt that in case of war it would be the main task of the Russian fleet to cut the lines of allied communications across the North Atlantic. Scandinavia now finds itself behind the new Soviet forward lines.

The obvious answer to the Soviet military build-up would be to set up Western missile-launching sites in the area. But this is thought to be politically impossible, for it would only lead to further escalation. It is the old vicious circle: the Soviet Union is permitted to gain a considerable military advantage, the balance of power changes, and once this has happened it becomes exceedingly difficult to restore the balance, for any such attempt is attacked by the Russians (and by domestic appeasers) as a provocation endangering détente and world peace.

Considering the weakness of NATO in the north, as well as the fact that Sweden no longer counts as a serious military factor, Norway has stood up remarkably well to Soviet pressure. But even in Norway there have been signs of "adjustment." As Nils Ørvik has put it in a recent article in *Aftenposten*, Soviet policy is aimed at weakening Norway's links with its Western allies:

> The purpose of such a weakening of ties can only be to coax Norway back to an undeclared neutralist policy with a totally insufficient and merely symbolic defense program. Given such a state of affairs, public declarations of neutrality are quite unnecessary. What counts is not what one says, but what ones does—or fails to do.

Many do not want Norway to become a small country standing alone, with virtually no chance of resisting the designs of its powerful neighbor. But there are others—not only the few left-wing Socialists but a substantial nationalist-neutralist-isolationist group which is by no means pro-Soviet but has decided simply to ignore events outside Norway. Their neutralism is a function of their domestic orientation; many of them opposed Norway's entry into the EEC out of fear that it would have a detrimental effect on the traditional way of life. Again to quote Ørvik:

> It is a wonder that so many of our domestic struggles for political power take place with the participants blind to foreign policy. So many Norwegians whose patriotism cannot be questioned participate in a process of "self-censorship" [vis-à-vis the Soviet Union] that conflicts with the entire theoretical basis upon which our democratic control rests.

It is, in some ways, 1939 all over again: Norway will be safe if only it sticks to its neutrality. As the *Norway Year Book* of 1938 put it, "The country is easy to defend"—with 13,000 soldiers under arms and a conscription period of eight weeks!

With all this, Norway is making efforts to strengthen its defenses—which is more than can be said for Denmark and Holland. The Danish Socialists (particularly the left wing) and the Radical Liberals actually wish to reduce a defense budget which is already one of the lowest in Europe. At the same time they oppose under any circumstances the presence of foreign troops on Danish soil. Thus not only the defense of Denmark is endangered but that of Scandinavia as a whole. (As General Hamre, the Norwegian chief of staff, said: "We may have to increase our own defense budget to the extent that the Danes reduce theirs.")

Indifference toward defense and the belief that Denmark is surrounded by friends and well-wishers may to a certain extent be generationally determined. When Erik Ninn Hansen, then the defense minister, was awakened on the night of August 21, 1968 and told about the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, he thought immediately (as he later wrote in his memoirs) of April 9, 1940, when the Germans occupied Denmark in the space of a few hours. But twelve years have now passed; the anti-defense lobby of 1980 consists largely of younger men and women who were in kindergarten or not yet born in 1940. For all they know the invasion never happened.

Defeatism in the Netherlands has similar roots. Those who lived through World War II and witnessed the consequences of unarmed neutrality are now gradually disappearing from the political scene. To be against defense has become fashionable, with pacifism now strongly recommended by the churches and the media. A high moral stance prevails: Holland can and should serve as a model of unilateral disarmament for all of Western Europe. Most of those advocating this line are by no means Communists or fellow travelers but well-meaning and concerned citizens who genuinely believe that their stand will promote the cause of peace. They can easily be exploited by those with specific goals in mind. The Soviet ambassador to the Hague recently received a high decoration from his government for having (in the words of a leading Dutch writer) so "deftly manipulated us" into taking the lead in the campaign against the modernization of tactical nuclear weapons.

Compared with Denmark and the Netherlands, the attitude of Finland has been almost heroic. When the Finnish government published a statement on Afghanistan that was vague to the point

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of unintelligibility (which may have been the intention in the first place), several newspapers openly criticized it, one even complaining about the double standard being applied: what would have been the reaction if the U.S. had dared to invade Nicaragua? When the Finnish foreign minister refused to give even verbal support to the U.S. on the hostage-taking in Iran, *Helsingin Sanomat* editorialized that this lack of response did not at all jibe with the view of the Finnish people. Finland's dependence on the Soviet Union has not lessened in recent years, and for this reason such manifestations of dissent (and even defiance) show real political courage. In the end, one has to sympathize with those in Helsinki who object to the indiscriminate use of the term "Finlandization." Finland, more often than not, acts as it does out of dire necessity, whereas the self-Finlandizers in Paris, Copenhagen, and Amsterdam face no such obligation.

IN CONTRAST to the massive Soviet pressure in northern Europe, there has been hardly any in the South, nor has there been any need for it. The NATO southern flank has disintegrated as a result of internal strains and conflicts.

The sad story of Turkey is well known. Foreign debts, domestic prices, and unemployment rates have continued to rise; smuggling and the black market have expanded; the growth rate and investment have fallen ever lower. A major financial operation to assist Turkey has been launched—$2 billion from OECD, IMF, and EEC—but since Turkey has to pay about that much in interest this year, and in addition will have to cover a $3.5 billion oil bill, the aid may not even compensate for half of this year's deficit. An inflated state apparatus consisting of more than a million civil servants, many of them political appointees, fails to cope with the administration of the country. Teachers, the judiciary, even the police are split along political lines and have joined the fray on opposite sides of the barricades. President Ecevit's Republicans have moved Left: some thirty representatives in parliament are said to be Communists who have joined the Republicans because there is no legal Communist party in the country. On the other side, the trend has been to the Right, toward Islamic and Pan-Turk revivalism.

The Turkish army, much against its wishes, has been drawn into the struggle, so far only on a regional basis. The army remains the sole force that could prevent chaos, but it cannot solve the questions to which the politicians have failed to find answers. Nor do its commanders want to step in unless there is a danger of total breakdown—a situation that may arise in the not-too-distant future. Up to 1979, terrorist actions were carried out more or less "evenly" by gangs of the extreme Right and Left; during the last year, the Left has greatly increased its share. The fact that the Turkish Left is divided into some forty factions and groupuscules has not made much difference in this respect; it just makes the work of the police that much more difficult. The Left terrorists seem to receive help from abroad, from the Greek opposition and via East Germany and Bulgaria, acting presumably on behalf of a bigger power. As for Armenian terrorism, it is almost entirely limited to operations outside Turkey and is little more than a nuisance compared with the Kurdish problem, which is a potential time bomb. For this reason, the Turkish rulers follow with much apprehension the Kurdish struggle in Iraq and Iran.

There have been indications of late that the Turks may be willing to make concessions on Cyprus, but there seems to be less eagerness on the part of Greece to resolve the matter. Andreas Papandreou, the head of the Greek opposition (Pasok) has made Cyprus ("the greatest national treason of our age") one of the main issues in his campaign against Karamanlis. Since the next elections may not be far off, and since Pasok has been gaining, the government coalition seems reluctant to do anything that will open it to charges of "appeasing" the Turks. Whether Papandreou is a man of the Left, a "Mediterranean Socialist," or an egomaniac with pronounced fascist tendencies is a subject on which one could discourse at length. His political platform combines extreme chauvinism—he would like to attack Turkey immediately if this were possible—with anti-Western demagoguery directed not only against NATO but also against the EEC. In this respect he follows the Soviet line more closely than do most West European Communist leaders, his closest allies being radical Third World leaders like Qaddafi.

In a recent parliamentary debate, as Papandreou again claimed that NATO and Europe were undermining the democratic institutions of Greece, Prime Minister Karamanlis interjected: " 'When you left Greece, where did you go?' (Laughter.) Papandreou: 'I did not hear you. . . .' " Papandreou, it will be recalled, went to the United States, which was a misfortune, for a prolonged stay in the Soviet Union would have had a more salutary effect on his thinking.

The appeal of Pasok is not so much to the working class as to the lower-middle class; paradoxically, it is also quite strong in the countryside because it has made even more extravagant (and unrealistic) promises to the peasants than has the government coalition. Whether democratic institutions would survive under Papandreou is, at best, a matter of doubt. Yet Pasok (together with the Communists) has today a better chance of attaining power than any other anti-Western party in Europe, not because of any immediate severe economic or political crisis but apparently because of the traditional impatience and desire for change that seem to be intrinsic to Greek politics. For this reason, Greece could soon become a country of great interest to the Soviet Union.

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One hears much talk today of the "temporary" weakness or eclipse of NATO's southern flank. The truth is that NATO's southern flank does not exist. What exists is a number of bases in Turkey and Greece, and even they cannot be taken for granted. To include the armed forces of Turkey and Greece in the statistics comparing NATO and the Warsaw Pact is mere wishful thinking.

THIS, then, in briefest outline, is Europe's present tale of woe. The facts are not in dispute, but the causes of weakness remain something of a mystery in view of the size of the continent's population, its industrial base, and even its military potential. With all the tribulations, what one sees is not so much a case of "objective" impotence as of a debilitating self-perception: we are weak, we are dependent, we cannot afford heroic gestures. After all, the countries of Europe have been in one or another form of trouble for many years, and at times have been in worse shape—and yet they did not present such a sad spectacle. In the last resort, Europe's paralysis is the price it has had to pay for its inability to unite beyond the stage of a customs union.

Europe divided is not in a position to resist Soviet or Third World pressure effectively, nor can it influence the senior partner in the Atlantic alliance. It can complain about not being consulted by Washington, but since there is no common European policy on any major issue, or any mechanism for consultation, complaints are futile.

But even a divided Europe should be able to acquit itself more honorably and to make its influence more strongly felt. What prevents the assertion of its political will? How is one to explain European fear of the consequences of economic sanctions against the Soviet Union of the kind urged by the United States in the wake of Afghanistan? Anyone not familiar with the relevant figures might well conclude that the West European economy would collapse but for the Russian connection. Yet in actual fact the Soviet Union is not among West Germany's ten most important customers, and its share in the foreign trade of France, Italy, and Britain is 3 per cent or less. There is no rational basis for these apprehensions.

The oil-producing countries are more important to Western Europe than is the Soviet Union, but even so it is difficult to understand why a country such as Britain (much less dependent than the rest on oil imports) should have made such abject and yet futile apologies ("subservient and groveling," in the words of a Member of Parliament) to Saudi Arabia over the recent showing in England of *Death of a Princess*, a film reconstruction of the story of a Saudi princess executed because of her relations with a commoner. (The Swedes prevented the screening of the film. They were praised by the Saudis for their "proud stand.") Even more disgraceful were the admonitions offered by some organs of the European press, lecturing the British on the need to refrain from actions offensive to the religious sensibilities of non-Europeans. A London paper had the following to say on the subject: "It is hard to know which is the more sickening—the executions themselves or the prurient and hypocritical way in which the affair has been treated in some of the European media." (But another editorial in the same paper offered this comment about America's plea for solidarity over Iran: "Friendship does not inevitably mean unqualified support for a course of action," etc., etc. Unqualified support is apparently something reserved for one's best customers.)

Some observers explain the afflictions of Europe's spinal column by referring to its growing "Levantinization." The demographic and cultural scene is certainly changing. Every fourth child born in Frankfurt is foreign; the number of foreigners in Belgium is greater than that of the inhabitants of Brussels; some thirty London cinemas show only Indian films these days; one-fourth of the labor force at Renault and at Dagenham (British Ford) is foreign. There are substantial Eritrean colonies in the Black Forest, and even bigger Algerian communities in French provincial cities. Whole suburbs of Berlin and other German cities have been taken over by Turks.

Some Europeans welcome the influence of both wealthy foreigners and "guest workers"—to use the misleading German term; others resent it. Indeed, the influx of so many new immigrants would not necessarily be a source of weakness to Europe if they could be integrated into their host societies. But the new immigrants are taught by their ideologists to reject European values, and this, on top of the inevitable economic and social strains, will lead with near certainty to major tensions; European society will not be the same as it once was. But this is a problem for the 1990's. Levantinization cannot explain Europe's weakness today.

Is the answer simply fear of the Russians? Or despair of America? It must be said that Washington is not blameless. Europe's impotence is partly a function of American weakness, and of the belief that America, being weak, cannot be trusted. Again and again the Carter administration has contributed to the confusion prevailing in Europe. Signals from Washington are unintelligible: one day Europeans are told that a war in the Persian Gulf may be imminent, the next it is solemnly proclaimed that on no account will use be made of a military option. Unfortunately, the recent showdown between America and its allies over the issue of sanctions against Iran centered on the wrong question, and so will resolve nothing.

Economic sanctions have virtually never worked even if unanimously adopted, and there is no reason to assume that they will be effective in the case of Iran. Given the anarchic conditions inside Iran—likely to continue for a long time—it is

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doubtful, indeed, that any pressure will work. There were only two ways to free the hostages—by a well-prepared commando raid or by the capture of Iranian hostages. The one failed, the other was not even tried. All other courses of action were, or are, exercises in futility or worse. The real problem in any case is not Iran but the containment of the Soviet Union, which brings us back once again to the solidarity of the Western alliance.

AMERICA's task in Europe is twofold, to reassure the faint-hearted and to stiffen the resolve of those who are prepared to stand straight. Some observers have reluctantly reached the conclusion that the chances of success are poor. The European malaise has been going on for a long time and there have been no signs of a real recovery. Everything has been tried from friendly persuasion to minor shock treatment—but America's European allies seem to be less trustworthy now than eighteen years ago, at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, when de Gaulle and Adenauer gave America their full support. Such steadfastness has now become rare; today the Americans are lectured on the virtues of crisis management and the need for better understanding between the superpowers. Some European politicians complain about the imbecility of American policy-makers—as if the record of these modern Rolands, Hotspurs, and Galahads entitled them to pass judgment on anyone.

But the picture is not entirely bleak. True enough, America's attitude toward its European allies will in the future have to be considerably tougher—which is not to say that Washington can demand European support for every election-year maneuver. Nor does it mean American dictatorial rule over NATO; on the contrary, Europe should be encouraged not to wait for U.S. leadership but to take greater initiative. It does, however, presuppose clear and consistent American policies. European allies should be expected to live up to their defense commitments and to show solidarity at a time of crisis. If some are not willing to do so, if they have reached the conclusion that they face no dangers and can get along like Sweden, they should not be implored to stay within the alliance. Such countries should rather be encouraged to go their own way and to look for reassurance from the Russians, the French, the Libyans, and other potential protectors. If they think they can come up with an alternative to NATO, let them try it. The alliance will not be weaker for their loss.

But it can be predicted with some confidence that no country will in fact leave the alliance; the invocation of quasi-neutrality is no more than idle talk. Europe has nowhere to go, and societies seldom accept voluntary satellization.

What if confusion and defeatism are after all so deeply ingrained in Europe that recovery has become impossible? As to the confusion, which is indeed far-reaching, it is not impervious to shocks —such as Teheran and Kabul. Defeatism, on the other hand, is far less tractable; there is no reasoning with fear. It is true that in some sectors fear is by now so deeply rooted that voluntary satellization may appear the least dangerous political option. But again, as in America, only a minority has been affected, even if it is a highly vocal and influential one. On both sides of the Atlantic, a new generation is now coming to the fore, different in approach from those whose outlook was decisively shaped by the Vietnam trauma and the intellectual bedlam of the late 1960's and early 1970's. It is a generation whose learning process has to start almost from scratch. But it is learning rapidly. Thus while America's relations with its allies are now in the stage of crisis, it is not yet a foregone conclusion that this marks the penultimate step before total breakdown. As the outside pressure grows, indeed, it could also lead to the strengthening of the old defense alliance.

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Is American Literature an Equal-Opportunity Employer?

Joseph Epstein

IMAGINE, please, Alberto D'Andrea. He is twenty-two years old and is studying American literature at the University of Rome. He has never been to the United States, but as a boy he grew up, you might say, on American movies. This partly explains his interest in American literature; less consciously, perhaps, he was drawn to the study of American literature because of America's power in the world, for since World War II, when the United States emerged as a superpower, its literature has taken on a worldwide interest, resulting in institutions such as the University of Rome having a department of American literature. Thus far Alberto has studied the Puritans and the great New England writers of the 19th century; he has studied Melville, Twain, and James; he has, in a brisk survey course, read some of the novelists of naturalism and, in the 20th century, Dos Passos, Hemingway, and Fitzgerald. Next term he is to take a seminar in contemporary writing in the United States, and in preparation for this seminar he has been able to get hold of a new book entitled the *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*.*

Although his English is quite good, it nonetheless takes Alberto a full two weeks to slog through the more than six-hundred pages of the *Harvard Guide*. Sometimes he thinks he will go a little mad trying to keep straight the names—oh, so many names—of American critics, novelists, dramatists, and poets (more than a hundred and sixty pages devoted to poets alone). These Barths and Plaths and Bellows and Blooms and Mailers and Malamuds and Millers (Arthur, Henry, Jason, Perry, and J. Hillis) refuse to sort themselves out in his mind. If the names remain a bit of a blur, in the end, owing to the way the *Harvard Guide* is organized, a general picture does begin to emerge, if rather hazily.

Contemporary American writing, young Alberto decides, is evidently a literature of great diversity. There is black literature, of course, of which Alberto has heard, with black writers on the attack against American society, and then further divided among themselves. There is women's literature, speaking from, as the critics in the United States say, another consciousness, "another, equally significant, area of existence." There are realists, naturalists, novelists of manners, and experimental novelists by the score. There are Southern writers, deep fellows these, writing on the theme of self and history and something called "the awful responsibility of Time." Then there are the Jewish writers—Alberto pictures them in *yarmulkes* and prayer shawls—dreamy figures, trying to flee the responsibility of tradition, family, civilization, so that they can enjoy sex a bit more.

If all these writers, with all their special concerns and points of view, have anything in common it is a grave unease in their own country. The *Harvard Guide*, Alberto cannot help but notice, claims over and over again that most American writers acutely feel a sense of powerlessness. In the words of one author discussed in the book, "America is a bitch." With his yellow-marker pen, Alberto D'Andrea draws a line under that sentence.

Alberto. . . . But enough of this young Italian, whom I have brought on stage in the first place because, reading through the essays that make up the *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*, I have had a difficult time imagining for whom the book might have been compiled. What purpose is this thick volume meant to serve? How, even, is it meant to be used? Is it to be read straight through? This is nearly impossible. Is it meant to be consulted in the way one does an encyclopedia? Nearly useless. Is it for the connoisseur in American literature? Too boring. The beginner? Highly confusing. The editor, Daniel Hoffman, remarks in his preface that the *Harvard Guide* is "a series of original essays by critics especially interested in the subjects and authors about whom they have chosen to write," and that these essays are intended, in Edwin Muir's phrase, as "a helpful intermediary between literature and the reader." Still, it is difficult to imagine who that reader might be—the mind goes all the way to Italy without quite finding him.

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The *Harvard Guide* does fulfill another function, though not one that its compiler and contributors are well aware of. It provides literary history—or, more precisely, a substitute for literary history. Although A. Walton Litz omits mention of it in his survey of literary criticism in the *Harvard Guide*, one of the casualties of criticism in postwar America—and "contemporary" in this volume begins in 1945 and runs through 1978—has been literary history. No Van Wyck Brooks, no Vernon Parrington has emerged or is likely to. Such literary history as has been written must be dug out of biographies and criticism of the kind that Edmund Wilson was perhaps the last American critic to write; it can also be found in surveys of collective authorship such as the *Harvard Guide*, though here, too, one has to dig it out and piece it together, in the fashion of an archeologist.

Having pieced together the literary history of the past thirty-three years in the United States through the essays of the contributors to the *Harvard Guide*, one arrives at one of the most impressive omnium gatherums of literary cliché ever assembled. With but one exception—that of Nathan A. Scott, Jr. in his essay on "Black Literature"—each contributor pumps vigorously away at the old melodeon, as Mencken used to call the grinding out of clichés. In the case of one contributor, Gerald Weales, who writes the essay on "Drama," there was probably no help for it. American drama since 1945 has not been exactly exhilarating. There have been the posthumous plays of Eugene O'Neill; the works of the odd couple, Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller; the complicated if not very interesting failures of Edward Albee after his early successes; the one-act plays of Sam Shepard; the one-play acts of various passing playwrights—and the rest has been British imports, Neil Simon, and trade-union negotiations. Weales has possibly published at least ten other versions of the essay he has now published once again in the *Harvard Guide*. But what is a theater critic to do? There's been no business in show business.

Along with Scott on "Black Literature" and Weales on "Drama," other contributors to the *Harvard Guide* and their subjects are: Alan Trachtenberg on "The Intellectual Background"; A. Walton Litz on "Literary Criticism"; Leo Braudy on "Realists, Naturalists, and Novelists of Manners"; Lewis P. Simpson on "Southern Fiction"; Mark Schechner on "Jewish Writers"; Josephine Hendin on "Experimental Fiction"; Elizabeth Janeway on "Women's Literature"; and Daniel Hoffman with three essays on poetry, "After Modernism," "Schools of Dissidents," and "Dissidents from Schools." Apart from Mrs. Janeway, all the contributors to the *Harvard Guide* are professors, though none is currently teaching at Harvard. The academy provides not only the dominant tone of the book, which is natural enough, but its organization as well, which is not natural at all. The *Harvard Guide* is organized, that is to say, rather like the curriculum of a university highly sensitive to public relations and worried about a ruckus with a touchy pressure group. By including essays on Jewish writing, black literature, and women's literature, the editor must have thought he was responding nicely to the time-spirit of the day.

THE *Harvard Guide*'s categories of organization oddly—and badly—skew the material it sets out to cover. Saul Bellow is treated exclusively as a Jewish writer (and given a paragraph for his plays in the "Drama" essay), and Ralph Ellison exclusively as a black writer. Since each is a writer with serious pretensions to belonging to world literature, what point can be served in boxing them off in academic ghettos, except to diminish them? But the nuttiness of the *Harvard Guide*'s scheme of organization is seen to best advantage in the essay on "Women's Literature," where Mary McCarthy, Susan Sontag, and Lillian Hellman, like Russian female athletes who have failed to pass the hormone test to qualify for the Olympics, are ruled out of discussion for being inadequately feminist in their points of view. Throughout the book there are discussions of writers whose chief interest is that they fall conveniently into one or another category and who, but for this convenience, would scarcely be worth mentioning at all. By sheer allocation of space, Norman Mailer—included in the index under "Jewish writer," "novelist of manners," and also "experimental writer"—would appear to be the dominant figure of the age, and a stranger (our Italian student Alberto, say) might judge him America's most important postwar writer, when in fact he has only been the country's noisiest writer. Meanwhile, a quiet writer of great artistry, William Maxwell, who fits into none of the *Harvard Guide*'s existing categories—perhaps one ought to have been set up entitled "Good Writing"—goes quite without mention.

A *vade mecum* of this particular kind inevitably allows ample room for cavil. One is not used, for example, to see Mickey Spillane discussed with the dead (and deadly) earnestness that he is in Leo Braudy's essay on "Realists, Naturalists, and Novelists of Manners." To have Eleanor Roosevelt's memoirs brought into an essay on "Women's Literature" surely seems a case of scraping the outside of the barrel; and talking about the things that Joyce Oates does better than Dostoevsky, as Mrs. Janeway does in the same essay, shows evidence of having been hit over the head with the barrel. One wishes there were a plainer way of writing about Southern fiction than the swampy rhetoric, the literary equivalent of Senator Claghorn, that Lewis P. Simpson has had to resort to in his essay, which ends: "About all that can be said with assurance is that since the Southern novel has adhered closely

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to the novel's origin in modern historicism, the Southern novelist's imagination of the self's condition awaits further revelations of the congruence of self and history."

But these, as I say, are cavils. What cuts deeper is the absence of any serious attempt in the *Harvard Guide* to argue with or test any of the current cultural assumptions under which literary work is carried on in the United States. It is this that makes the book seem such a compendium of clichés—up-to-date clichés, to be sure, but clichés for all that. In his essay, "The Intellectual Background," the historian Alan Trachtenberg warms up the melodeon for much that is to follow. Trachtenberg begins with the standard revisionist version of the cold war and of the period up through the middle 1960's, which he refers to as "this phase of moralistic and anti-intellectual acquiescence." Against the energies of modernism—a word he uses in the loosest possible way—he sees those of "counter-modernism, resistance to the very idea of the modern. . . . It took the form of racism and sexism, resistance to redressing racial injustice and full equality to women. . . ." C. Wright Mills is approvingly quoted as saying that writers, artists, and professors have now become "employees," "dependent salaried workers who spend the most alert hours of their living being told what to do."

Really pounding away at the melodeon now, Trachtenberg misses nary a note: Robert Coles, the Uriah Heep of American left-wing social science, is praised for his "major undertaking in cultural psychoanalysis in the period, *Children of Crisis*"; there is the standard view of Paul Goodman (*Growing Up Absurd* is cited for its "voice of compassionate discontent and its unusual civic responsibility"); Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse are admired as leaders of the "party of eros," though "many commentators have found that [Marcuse's] later thought tends to conflate art and politics and open the door to elitism. . . ." Trachtenberg concludes on a note of grandiloquent hedge: "Whether the imaginative writer will continue to hold his place of authority against the new media and against the cosmic fantasies fulfilled by reality itself remains to be seen." In short, as Adam said to Eve, while passing through the gates of Eden, "We're living in an age of transition."

With a background such as Trachtenberg's, what does the foreground of the *Harvard Guide* provide? Other of its contributors are not so overtly political as Trachtenberg, with the exception of Elizabeth Janeway, who, over the past decade, has gone from a pedestrian book reviewer to a zealous feminist ideologue. Yet, more literary than political though its contributors be, it is extraordinary how easily—and repeatedly—phrases come up describing the United States as "a madness-inducing society," "a disturbed society," "overstructured," a society dominated by "destructiveness, greed, and vulnerability," "a personal tragedy"; and, finally, in the essay on "Experimental Writing," Josephine Hendin blithely remarks that Thomas Pynchon "indicts the capitalistic urge, the multinational corporation, the mega-cartel as models of America, its allies and enemies, drifting toward centralized wealth and power."

Sometimes, as in these remarks on Pynchon, the critics are only describing the views of the authors they are writing about. More often, though, they seem to share these views. Certainly the critics in the *Harvard Guide* only rarely engage their author's assumptions in argument. Increasingly over the years critic and author are at one in their assumption. And this is true not just of literary critics: in *The Culture of Narcissism*, Christopher Lasch, wishing to demonstrate that American corporations make automatons, zombies, prostitutes out of their employees, adduces as proof a passage from Joseph Heller's novel, *Something Happened*. Like the fly and the dunghill, left-wing sociology and left-wing fiction feed upon and replenish each other.

The melodeon is never stifled for long in the pages of the *Harvard Guide*, and one of its repeated high-C clichés has to do with the decade of the 1950's, which, its contributors seem generally to agree, was a dreary decade indeed. Leo Braudy is at one moment telling us that "The conservatism of the 1950's therefore goes hand in hand with the great postwar consumer society, the proliferation of the suburbs, and the expanding number of things to buy," when Gerald Weales chips in at the next with his remark that the 50's was "a decade famous for its blandness, its spirit of conformity." After other comments of a similar kind, it is a bit dispiriting to have Daniel Hoffman, as late as page 460, refer to "the postwar period of seeming social and literary conformity." Well, was it "seeming" conformity or the real thing?

Aside from the circumstance that the United States had a less than greatly literate President in Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 1950's was in fact a decade of literary production of an extremely high quality. Not only were Faulkner, Hemingway, and Dos Passos; Frost, Stevens, and Eliot; John Crowe Ransom, Yvor Winters, and Allen Tate still alive and publishing, but Saul Bellow and Ralph Ellison, Robert Lowell and Randall Jarrell, Theodore Roethke and John Berryman, were coming into their full maturity as artists; Lionel Trilling and Robert Penn Warren were at the height of their powers, and Edmund Wilson was still a powerful engine of literary creation. *Partisan Review*, potent and serious, had not yet turned into the journal got up in youth drag that it was to become. Literature had a dignity and a standing it has not since regained. And no one among the authors of

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the *Harvard Guide* seems have noticed this; at least, none has chosen to mention it.

LITERATURE, as Geoffrey Grigson once remarked, is always in a bad way, like government or politics or mankind. Granting this, one must go on to say that contemporary American literature seems in an even worse way than usual, though one gets almost no sense of this from the *Harvard Guide*. The closest one comes to it is an oblique nod from A. Walton Litz in his essay, "Literary Criticism," where he notes, apropos of the strange intellectual peregrinations of Harold Bloom and the critics who have come to be called deconstructionists, that "we are not confronted with contemporary writers of such overwhelming power that they command the critic's attention." Listen to what Litz is saying—that our writers are not good enough, or at any rate not interesting enough, for our critics. How did this come to be? Wedded to their clichés about the 1950's—Litz: "As the monolithic social and political attitudes of the 1950's gave way to the diversity and conflict of the 1960's, literary criticism also lost its monolithic appearance"—the contributors to the *Harvard Guide* are in no position to understand what has happened.

What has happened, I believe, is that American writers have never received so much attention or been so institutionally well supported—and never has contemporary literature seemed quite so beside the point, so peripheral, so trivial. This is not to say that good literary work isn't being done; it is, in discrete novels, volumes of verse, criticism, and especially in literary biography, which the *Harvard Guide* does not deal with at all. But literature *en bloc* seems to have lost its force, and no longer seems as central to serious culture or to the life of the nation as it once, and not so long ago, did. Since the *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing* does not seem to have detected this, let alone speculated upon it, perhaps I can be allowed to fill in this ample gap with a few ruminations of my own.

A good place to begin is by totting up the palpable changes that have taken place in the conditions and circumstances of serious literary production since World War II. Among the most obvious has been the enlargement of the freedom allowed novelists, poets, autobiographers, and biographers to write about the sexual component of life, and in any language they choose. I say enlargement of freedom but in fact this freedom is now quite complete. James Jones, Gore Vidal, and Norman Mailer are among the postwar writers who helped bring this about; but the great figure here is Henry Miller, who paid the real price of having his books actually banned from his own country. Yet greatly convenient to writers though it has been, this new freedom does not seem to have resulted directly in any masterworks or marked any towering advance in human understanding of the kind that literature at its best makes possible.

The postwar period has marked a change, too, in the relation between American and European writing. During this time, American writers ceased to gaze longingly on Europe, with its older and denser culture, in the manner of Henry James and Edith Wharton, and after them the writers of the generation of the 1920's. As form follows function, so often does literature seem to follow political power. America, in literature, was where the action was—or at least seemed to be—and Europe for the first time in matters literary gazed longingly at us (hence the department of American literature at the University of Rome). For whatever it may bode, this situation appears to be coming to an end. Flashier American literary critics are now looking to France for models and methods. The shedding of American feelings of literary inferiority vis-à-vis Europe appears, too, in the end not to have come to much.

FAR from feeling encouraged by a sense of a new national grandeur, literature followed sociology and in the United States took an ethnic turn. Black writing and Jewish writing were said, during this period, to be entering upon a golden age. We now know this to have been largely bogus. The "unmeltable ethnics," as Michael Novak styled the resurgence of ethnic feeling in the United States, melted quickly enough in literature. The essay, "Jewish Writers," by Mark Schechner, after many trite and a few quite false observations—Schechner's first sentence speaks of "a coherent and identifiable Jewish culture and religion [having] effectively ceased to exist"—takes up in detail only five novelists, the old Hart, Schaffner & Marx trio of Bellow, Malamud, and Roth, and adds Isaac Bashevis Singer and Norman Mailer. Schechner's own style has the taste of an older Jewish critical manner gone sour; his prose is a confection, reheated, of Irving Howe and Alfred Kazin, with occasional bebop touches. The Jew, he writes, with a characteristic overdramatized flourish, "has been obliged historically to turn the hyphen in his identity into the cutting edge of a sharp sensibility." Schechner is down on Malamud, high on Roth. But reading his essay one comes to recognize that the Jewish content in much contemporary writing—Singer and perhaps Malamud apart—is not very great. Find, for example, the Jewish element in a Norman Mailer, whom Schechner characterizes in the following terms: "To interpret the whole career as an exercise in consistency, one would have to note that at the bottom of all concerns is the obsession with power, usually at the point of conjunction between sex and politics where policy melts into potency and the arms race abuts the presidential orgasm." Such a sentence makes plain that there has not been all

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that much Jewish writing, but only a number of Jews, coming from a highly verbal culture, who write.

But contemporary American Jewish writers have not been as wounded by being lumped together as have black writers. The one unfailingly thoughtful and penetrating essay in the *Harvard Guide,* Nathan A. Scott, Jr.'s "Black Literature," offers an account of these wounds. Throughout his essay Scott mentions one after another promising black writer who has fallen silent, and the reason is that these writers are working under a pressure that other contemporary American writers have not had to face. They are caught between the Scylla of what has become white critical apathy and the Charybdis of black agitational militancy, and their craft has taken a terrific banging about. Scott praises the novelist William Demby's *Beetlecreek* (1950), for example, for "its refusal of the automatisms of racial protest and the cogency of its construction," and of the characters of the novel he remarks that they "are not enlisted in the services of the sort of *roman à thèse* in which Negro writers have tended to make their chief investment."

Those few black novelists and poets who have held out, who have refused to abandon the stringent demands of literary art in favor of the easy anger of propaganda, have been read out by the black critics of the movement known as the Black Aesthetic, and of which a characteristic utterance is that of Harold Cruse: "Criticism of Negro writing is mainly the Negro's responsibility." Apropos of Richard Gilman, a white critic, having gone along with this view, Scott remarks that "it would seem surely that a profound collapse of faith in the indivisibility of the human family and in the unity of culture has everywhere become a notable feature of the period." Scott's essay lists some casualties: James Baldwin, who has pulled away from the reasoned penetration of his work in the 1950's, and who has since become a writer increasingly given over to the passions of hatred and contempt; and writers such as Melvin Tolson, who have not succumbed to these passions, but who have, unfairly according to Scott, never been "considered as something other than merely a special case of ethnic ferment." Scott closes his courageous essay on a note of complaint about the *Harvard Guide* itself: "There is an insurmountable impropriety involved in the discussion of black American writers under a special rubric reserved for them alone. But for the moment, given the carelessness with which the critical community canvasses their work, they must, as it would seem, be so treated, if any assessment of their accomplishment is to be guaranteed at all."

BUT of course the *Harvard Guide* allows a separate rubric for black literature because that is how it is done in the university. And here we come to one of the chief points about contemporary American writing, which is the increased importance to it of the university. Alan Trachtenberg mentions this, sanguinely and almost in passing, as "a phenomenon that indicates not only a new ground of acceptance for serious literature, a new audience among college students, but also, at an even deeper level, a new recognition of literature as itself a serious and legitimate form of knowledge—a form, that is, of idea as well as emotion; a form of *thinking* about common existence." This, though, isn't the half of it; it isn't even a hundredth part of it.

The principal, the major, the overriding and overwhelming fact about American writing between the end of World War II and the present is its nearly complete absorption by American universities. Even though a few novelists (Norman Mailer, John Updike, and William Styron), a few poets (James Merrill and Richard Howard), and a lone serious critic (Hilton Kramer) have remained outside the university, the preponderance of contemporary American writers now work in universities. More than this, contemporary writing has come to occupy a greater and greater part of the literary curriculum. Where once a young novelist might have learned about life working on a newspaper—as did Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, Ernest Hemingway—he is now more likely to learn about it through a creative-writing program. Where once the world was a poet's workshop, today a poetry workshop is his world. A literary reputation is currently validated and certified above all by a writer's work finding a place in the contemporary curricular canon. For better or worse, the seat of contemporary literature is now the university.

Nor can there be much question that it has been for worse. An index to the health of our literature has long been the novel, and the novel, of all literary forms, seems to have come upon very lean days. Part of the reason for this, surely, is that increasing numbers of novelists and story writers are now university teachers, and thus locked away from their true subject, which is the great and very real world. That their true subject is lost to them, in turn, helps to explain the high production of experimental fiction. The novelists discussed in Josephine Hendin's essay, "Experimental Fiction," are many of them professors. Perhaps this is why their novels are so teachable; the problem is that they are not very readable. But then much of this fiction, it needs to be said, is not really intended for use outside an English department.

"Experimental fiction admittedly leaves out much of the joy and nobility which exist in the real world," writes Professor Hendin, "but all art involves exclusion; no single work of art tells the whole truth about all experience." But why is this fiction, and so much else that passes for literary

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study in the university, so unrelievedly bleak in its views? (Not that cheerfulness is wanted, but if a writer is going to be glum, he ought at least to be interesting in his glumness.) The reason is that the professors who write and teach contemporary literature have swallowed the more dolorous views of modernism—in short, the wasteland outlook—and have accepted the normalization of alienation. Sentences encapsulating these views—little laboratory slides of despair—pop out all through the pages of the *Harvard Guide*. Here is one in Leo Braudy's hyper-ventilating style: "History was no longer a pattern of factually and philosophically analyzable causes; it was a nightmare, an allegory of good and evil, a metaphysical comic book." Here is Daniel Hoffman, explicating a bit of poetry and society along with it: "From his [Robert Lowell's] poems on the world about him we can infer that society itself is mad; the suffering poet in a mental hospital looms as a Promethean hero for our sick age." Nuggets of unearned nihilism of this kind are commonplace in the criticism devoted to contemporary writing, and the *Harvard Guide* is strewn with them.

The antinomian strain appears to nestle comfortably with the contemporary literary imagination. As contemporary writers are deemed not good enough for some of our critics, so is their country deemed not good enough for many contemporary writers. E. L. Doctorow, Robert Coover, Joseph Heller are the names of but a few of the better-known contemporary writers who require complete concordance with their politics to read them at all. There is no imaginative inquiry, no literary testing of the grounds of assumption in their works; as their novels open, the case on America is closed. Stendhal, in what has since become a famous remark, said that "Politics in a work of literature is like a pistol shot in the middle of a concert," but many contemporary American novelists and poets are so patently and thoroughly political that reading them is like being at a pistol range hoping to hear a note of music.

Yet another result of the absorption of contemporary literature by the university is the vast overproduction of criticism devoted to contemporary writers. Between the various guides and contemporary-authors series—Twayne, University of Southern Illinois, Minnesota Pamphlets (now Scribner's American Writers Series)—there is scarcely an American writer of any reputation (John Updike, Gore Vidal, Thomas Pynchon) who has not had at least one book-length study devoted to him, even though he might be very much in mid-career. It is all so vastly overdone, so thoroughly out of proportion. Literary journals offer no protection. A recent issue of *Parnassus* carries an article about the poet Adrienne Rich that is so idolatrous as to be unseemly applied to anyone still alive. *Salmagundi*, a journal that has published some good things over the years, recently ran an essay running to forty-two pages entitled " 'Shipwreck, Autochthony, and Nostos': An Approach to the Poetry of John Peck." Happening upon it, I wondered if this essay might be a parody—it begins with a quotation from Peck's doctoral thesis and we later learn that he was born in Pittsburgh in 1941—but I have to report that it is not. Forty-two pages in a serious journal about a not very well-known poet who is not yet forty. Why? Reading much criticism of contemporary American writers one is reminded of the late Benjamin Sonnenberg's description of his work as a public-relations man: "I make very large pedestals for very small statues."

But even when the statues have rather more amplitude, the pedestals of contemporary American criticism have become extremely boring through reiteration. This is especially evident in the *Harvard Guide*. Simpson on Faulkner, Braudy on Dos Passos, Schechner on Bellow, Hendin on Nabokov, Hoffman on Stevens—one feels one has read all this before. And this is because, apart from a turn of phrase here or a twist of judgment there, one has. It has all been said before—over and over again.

STILL, the *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing* does have one serious advantage, and this is that it causes one to think about the sweep of our literature over the past three decades. Despite the diversity of writing detailed in the *Harvard Guide*, despite the variety of talents at work among our writers, despite the enthusiasm of its contributors, one comes away feeling that contemporary American writing, taken as a corpus, is a good deal less than first-rate—that, in fact, we are currently in the midst of a distinctly second-rate literary era. By what measure can one determine this? I would invoke two measures. First, the presence of great writers. Second, the contribution that literature seems to be making to the life of the nation. On neither of these measures does contemporary American writing score high.

One might argue that the first measure, great writers, cannot be known—that this is a judgment available only to posterity. But one can have more than an inkling. Gravity is the quality that confers greatness in literature, even on comic literature; gravity has to do with spirituality, with high and undeflected seriousness, with recognition that literature provides the best record of the common humanity of all. It is immediately notable. Many contemporary Russian writers—Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sinyavsky, Vladimir Voinovich—have it. So do V. S. Naipaul and Marguerite Yourcenar. But it is in very short supply in the United States just now.

As for the second measure, the contribution that contemporary literature seems to be making to the life of the nation, this, in the United States today,

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seems sadly negligible. Never have writers seemed so much to be writing for themselves. The old literary man's gambit here was to complain that readers are not sufficiently advanced, too philistine, not quite good enough. But there is a potentially ample public for serious literature in the United States; and one of the interesting phenomena of the postwar years has been the change in the fortunes of certain writers, once contributors to COMMENTARY and *Partisan Review*, from small-public to large-public writers. (The watershed year was perhaps 1964, when Saul Bellow's *Herzog* and Mary McCarthy's *The Group* became best-sellers.) But increasingly, contemporary writers have cut themselves off from the lay public, and have grown isolated and insulated. Critics have joined them rather than attempted to argue them back.

"IN any period," F. R. Leavis once noted, "it is upon a very small minority that the discerning appreciation of art and literature depends." That small minority is in a condition of dishevelment today. Even though many writers have become celebrities and support for writing has never been so generous or the attention accorded it greater, American writing itself has never seemed less important, and more lost, than it does now. And it will take more than a *Harvard Guide* to help it find its way back.

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Freud's Jewish Problem

David Aberbach

All psychological systems, Sigmund Freud's included—indeed, all systems of thought—are stamped with the limitations of their creators. This might seem a gloomy and cynical way of looking at the history of ideas, yet in most cases, the limitations not only spur the creation of the system but also constitute its very stuff. The biases of a man, with their traumatic origin, make him think, force him to rummage through his world, discovering why he burns with the need to understand, to illuminate, why he thinks and acts in a particular way. To ask why ideas come into existence is a step toward learning their meaning and application.

On October 15, 1897, during the self-analysis that led to *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud wrote to his friend and colleague, Wilhelm Fliess, that he had discovered in himself what he was later to call the Oedipus complex: "I have found love of the mother and jealousy of the father in my own case too." The development of psychoanalysis was thus determined, and centered on incest and aggression. Freud's accounts of his complex are sketchy, but the main cause is touched upon in Ernest Jones's biography, namely, an incestuous dependence upon a domineering mother. This dependence was encouraged by her strong affection for him as her first-born and favorite child; by her beauty and extreme youthfulness in comparison with his father, Jakob Freud, who was twenty years older and had been married before; by the death of her second child when Freud was eighteen months old; by her affliction with tuberculosis which required confinement in a sanatorium; and by the overly demonstrative and excessive protection that Jewish mothers have often given their children, perhaps to inure them against hardships that they have been liable to suffer as Jews.

But if incestuous dependence can account for Freud's unconscious attachment to his mother, incestuous rivalry alone cannot account for the virulence of Freud's unconscious hostility toward his father. Jakob Freud was by no means an overbearing or indifferent father; on the contrary, he was kind, affectionate, and proud of his son, though he was somewhat detached by his age and temperament from the rest of the family. Yet in Freud's dreams his father is constantly degraded by association with illiteracy, feeble-mindedness, sexual immorality, drunkenness, urination, or defecation. A death-wish against his father is expressed in a dream in which Freud hands him a urinal shaped like a poisoned chalice belonging to Lucrezia Borgia. Interpreting another of his dreams, Freud writes, "I have broken off at thoughts which would have contained an unfriendly criticism of my father." No doubt he exercised his censorship elsewhere as well.

Some of Freud's theories about fathers are cruelly defamatory and obscene. For over four years (1893-97), he held to the theory that hysteria in women is the result of seduction by their fathers. According to Jones, Freud believed that his own father, too, was guilty of such acts. Similarly, he thought at first that neurotics had syphilitic fathers. Aggression against the father appears in Freud's stress upon the Oedipus complex (which he first called the "father complex"), as the father stands accused of causing castration-anxiety and neurosis.

Freud was suspiciously eager to lend support to far-fetched theories involving the murder of the father, or father-image. He believed, for example, that in primitive times sons murdered their fathers in order to have the women. Likewise, he thought that the Jews had murdered their father-figure, Moses, in the desert. Still, it is interesting that although Freud generally had few inhibitions about publishing his work, precisely those books in which the theme of parricide figures most strongly—*The Interpretation of Dreams, Totem and Taboo, Moses and Monotheism*—were published only after hesitation and delay. After reading *Totem and Taboo*, Jones and Sandor Ferenczi suggested to Freud that his work was a sublimation of parricidal impulses, that "he had in his imagination lived through the experiences he described in his book, that his elation represented the excitement of killing and eating the father, and that his doubts were only the reaction."

Errors in Freud's dreams often signify hostility to the father. Interpreting one of his own dreams containing an error, Freud reveals that in it he was identifying himself with a patient who, as a result

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of his desire to murder his father, "was unable to go out into the street because he was tortured by the fear that he would kill everyone he met." His dream confusion of Hasdrubal with Hamilcar, in which he put the brother's name instead of the father's, seems to him to expose "dissatisfaction with my father's behavior toward the 'enemies of our people' " and fantasies of being the son not of his father, but of his half-brother, Emanuel.

In another dream, Freud is overcome with hostility and says of a deceased colleague, Josef Paneth, *non vixit* (he did not live) rather than *non vivit* (he is not alive). Marthe Robert, in her book *From Oedipus to Moses*, interprets this to indicate a desire by Freud that his father had never lived, a surmise given added credibility by the fact that the dream occurred during the week of the second anniversary of Jakob Freud's death. Another error in this dream, the substitution of *patriae* for *publicae* on an inscription, reveals more directly that Freud's underlying concern is the father. In the dream, Freud discovered that by looking straight at apparitions of the dead he could make them disappear. No doubt he wanted his father's memory, too, and all that he stood for, to stop haunting him.

FREUD was himself shocked by his discovery, precipitated by the death of Jakob Freud in 1896, that he hated his father. The crisis which followed lasted for several years and is reflected in Freud's major work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In this period, he was afflicted by an exacerbation of neurotic symptoms which drove him to self-analysis. He was much sicker, especially at this time, than Jones's biography leads us to believe. His moods fluctuated intensely between despair and optimism; he had severe migraines and nasal catarrh, chronic indigestion, anxiety attacks, a dread of dying, particularly through heart failure, and impaired potency. From studying his illnesses, believing that by penetrating to their causes he could cure himself, Freud concluded that his symptoms were partly a self-punishment because he had unconsciously wanted his father's death. What caused these parricidal tendencies and self-punishment? According to Freud, it was incestuous rivalry for the mother.

Incestuous rivalry is, presumably, a universal cause of the animosity sons feel toward their fathers. However, Freud's own difficulties also had other, more circumstantial causes, involving Jewishness and anti-Semitism. Jones does not give these factors the attention they deserve. A major cause of tension between father and son was the fact that Freud went much further than his father along the path of assimilation from a deeply religious Eastern European environment into a non-Jewish Western miliéu.

Jakob Freud was born in 1815, the year of Waterloo, in the Galician *shtetl* of Tysmenitz. Until he was about twenty, when he moved to Freiburg, he was as observant as a modern Hasid in Williamsburgh. His father, who died shortly before Freud was born in 1856, had been a hasidic rabbi (Freud was named Shlomo in his memory). His family background and the cultural environment in which he was raised meant that Jakob Freud was steeped in Jewish learning and rituals.

By 1855, when he reached Vienna, Jakob Freud had dispensed with many of his early religious observances. Nevertheless, he was Jewish to the core. That he was able to conduct by heart the Passover *seder*—which is recited only twice a year in the Diaspora—indicates how deeply engrained was his Jewish education. He regularly studied Talmud and Hebrew literature. In some ways he was a typical Jew of the Haskalah (the period of the Enlightenment), disillusioned with a traditionally religious way of life (and preferring Hebrew or German to Yiddish), but unable to abandon it completely or find anything to take its place. When he gave his son a Bible for his thirty-fifth birthday, he wrote a Hebrew inscription which could have been written by a more observant Jew than the one he had become: "Thou hast seen in this Book the vision of the Almighty, thou hast heard willingly, thou hast done and hast tried to fly high upon the wings of the Holy Spirit."

Still, the religious feeling behind these words had apparently faded long before. T.S. Eliot's observation on the Elizabethan dramatist Philip Massinger has relevance to Freud's father and, in general, to German-speaking Jews of the 19th century: "As soon as the emotion disappears, the morality which ordered it appears hideous." Hideous indeed were Jewish rituals to Freud, for as he usually saw them observed at home and by other assimilated Viennese Jews, they were empty and meaningless.

Freud came to despise Jewish religion, indeed, all religion, as a form of psychological illness, a compulsive neurosis, a sign of communal immaturity. He did not hold to this rigidly, but it was his view. The vehemence of his rejection of religion was a symbolic rejection of the father who represented, though he did not properly observe or teach, a traditional Jewish way of life. Although ritualistic elements are part of psychoanalysis, Freud placed little emphasis upon the fact that ritual may have a positive function in life. The fearful and defensive side of religion, rather than the loving side, loomed largest in his mind.

IT IS likely that the poverty of his Jewishness helped to generate Freud's anger at his father. Judaism as Freud learned it from his father was a thing of shreds and patches to which one paid lip-service. The hypocrisy of it was abhorrent to Freud. His sense of what it meant to be Jewish was inauthentic and confused. It is true that the closest adult friend of Freud's youth was his beloved teacher, Samuel Hammerschlag, who for many years taught him Hebrew

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and Bible. But Freud also had a Catholic nanny who frequently took him to church. Afterward he would deliver imitations of sermons. From childhood, Freud was fascinated by Jesus and Paul. He chose to open his medical practice on Easter Sunday, presumably as a gesture of identification with Jesus, and confessed to the Protestant theologian Oskar Pfister a special sympathy for Paul as "a genuinely Jewish character." Such interests were utterly foreign, and probably anathema, to Jakob Freud.

Freud's distorted view of Judaism betrays an unmistakable Oedipal bias. His rejection of the father and of the "Father religion" went side by side: "The Mosaic religion had been a Father religion: Christianity became a Son religion. The old God, the Father, took second place; Christ, the Son, stood in his place, just as in those dark days every son had longed to do. . . . From now on Jewish religion was, so to speak, a fossil" (*Moses and Monotheism*). Upon the stage of Jewish ritual, the drama of Freud's troubled relationship with his father was enacted. While Jakob Freud continued to observe the vestiges of an Orthodox Jewish life, his son emphatically refused to do so. He wrote to Martha Bernays during their engagement: "Am I to fast on Yom Kippur? . . . Surely not."

Characteristically, Freud opposed having a traditional Jewish burial service for his father. His late arrival at the funeral, a dream of his suggests, aroused strong compunction. (For himself he chose cremation, a final act of defiance against his father, as it is a violation of Jewish law.) The idea of being married under a *chupa* (canopy) was loathsome to Freud; rather than undergo this ordeal, he went so far as to discuss with Josef Breuer the possibility of conversion to Christianity. He once went to a Jewish wedding and, as Jones tells it, "gazed at the scene with fascinated horror and then wrote a letter of sixteen pages describing all the odious details in a spirit of malign mockery."

Freud's life as a husband and father involved a defiance of Jewish tradition. That he married a strictly Orthodox Jewish girl, the granddaughter of a famous rabbi, shows how strong was the influence of his background. During their engagement, he promised Martha that "something of the core, of the essence of this meaningful and life-affirming Judaism will not be absent from our home." But after marrying her, he persuaded her, somewhat against her will, to become as completely non-Orthodox as himself. Isaiah Berlin has recalled that Freud at the end of his life was still bickering with Martha about whether to light candles on Friday nights (he was against it).

Freud had not learned from his father "meaningful and life-affirming Judaism," and he could not give this to his children. He raised them in abysmal ignorance of their heritage. They were aware that something was missing. Martin, his son, tells a revealing anecdote about Martha's mother, Emmeline: "On Saturdays we used to hear her singing Jewish prayers in a small but firm and melodious voice. All of this, strangely enough in a Jewish family, seemed alien to us children who had been brought up without any instruction in Jewish ritual."

Raised in an environment which taught him both to look askance upon his religious heritage and to struggle to gain advancement in a hostile Gentile world, Freud had little to shield him from feeling that the religion of his fathers was an odious handicap. He wished at times that he were not his father's son, and not the son of any Jew. His dreams betrayed the wish for better origins: "If only I had been the second generation, the son of a professor or court counselor, I would certainly have *got on faster*." He had fantasies of how different things would have been had he been born the son of his half-brother, Emanuel, who had gone to England to escape the clutches of anti-Semitism. To his colleague, Karl Abraham, he complained, "If my name were Oberhüber, in spite of everything, my innovations would have met with far less resistance."

Perhaps out of disdain for the humble Jewish background of his father, Freud had a preference for noble origins. He subscribed to the theory that the works attributed to Shakespeare were actually written by the Earl of Oxford, and to the theory that Moses was not a Jew but an Egyptian prince. While Freud greatly admired the heroic side of Jewish history, he could not but feel, living in one of the most virulently anti-Semitic countries in the world, that his Jewishness was a millstone around his neck.

As IN the case of many Jewish families at the time, a touchstone of conflict between father and son was education. Jakob Freud's early life in the *shtetl* was one in which only the Bible, the prayer book, and Jewish legal texts—especially the Talmud—were thought to have real value. Jakob Freud probably did not consciously preserve this attitude, but evidently he did not altogether respect secular learning. Freud recalled that as a child he had once been handed a book by his father to destroy: "Not easy to justify from an educational point of view!" He mentions in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* that his hostility toward his father was connected with books. As Jakob Freud's education was predominantly talmudic, he was unable to advise his son in his career. The contrast in education between father and son, not so unusual for the period, was nevertheless striking: while Jakob Freud studied the legal discourses of the Talmud, his son kept a diary in Greek. Freud, enlightened and university-educated, abhorred his father's continuing interest in the Talmud, considering it backward. Jones tells us that the only examination which Freud ever failed was in medical jurisprudence. This failure, from a Freudian viewpoint,

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might indicate an unconscious rejection of the father whom Freud identified with law.

Jakob Freud's defective education and his consequent limitations rankled with Freud, all the more so as Jakob Freud was an ineffectual provider and the family was impoverished. Freud's own success gave rise to a sense of guilt. At the end of his life he wrote of people "wrecked with success" who "fall ill or even go entirely to pieces, because an overwhelmingly powerful wish of theirs has been fulfilled." He omits mention of the great crisis in his life after his own "overwhelmingly powerful wish," the death of his father, had come about, but gives a related example—a mysterious depression which he felt before visiting the Acropolis in 1905, and a reaction at the site that "what I see is not real." He explains:

> A sense of guilt was attached to the satisfaction in having gone such a long way: there was something about it that was wrong, that from earliest times had been forbidden. It was something to do with a child's criticism of his father, with the undervaluation of earlier childhood. It seems as though the essence of success was to have got further than one's father, and as though to excel one's father was still something forbidden. . . . The very theme of Athens and the Acropolis in itself contained evidence of the son's superiority. Our father had had no secondary education, and Athens could not have meant much to him. Thus what interfered with our enjoyment of the journey to Athens was a feeling of *filial piety*.

With his father's encouragement, Freud had achieved the intellectual perspective which made criticism of his way of life and even hatred of it almost inevitable. In the non-Jewish world (symbolized by Athens or Rome), Freud went much further than his father. His superiority was at times a distressing burden. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* he tells of waking in a fright after dreaming that children can achieve what their fathers fail to do.

HERE it might be asked whether the urge to go further than one's father necessarily gives rise to guilt or fear. Traditionally in Jewish life sons are encouraged to achieve as much as possible and thereby bring honor to their parents. According to a rabbinic saying, "No father envies his son." Then what was the source of Freud's pathological desire to outdo his father (which, after all, was not so very difficult), and make intellectual conquests? Once again his relation to his own Jewishness provides the key. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud tells of a turning point in his early life, his deep hurt and disillusionment upon hearing of his father's unheroic conduct when humiliated by an anti-Semite. From then on, he was obsessed with Rome as a symbol of the Catholic Church and of anti-Semitism, and he worshipped Hannibal, the Semitic general who, unlike Jakob Freud, fought Rome courageously. Inwardly he raged against qualities which he associated with his father and his Jewishness—passivity, cowardice, ignorance.

Unlike his father, Freud was never passive in the face of anti-Semitism. This cost him a good deal of strain as he was himself a rather shy, unobtrusive man. Through intense yearning for heroism and lifelong hero worship, Freud reacted against his father's—and his own—powerlessness, and the traditional, powerless life of the Jews. To Martha he wrote during their engagement: "I have often felt as though I had inherited all the passion and all the defiance with which our ancestors defended their Temple and could gladly sacrifice my life for one great moment in history. And with all that I was always so powerless and could not express my flowing passions." Freud's sympathy for Zionism was owing partly to the fact that the Zionists, unlike most traditional Jews at that time, were prepared to fight and if necessary give up their lives for their land.

Military heroes, especially those whom he identified as or associated with Jews, such as Moses, Hannibal, Oliver Cromwell (after whom he named one of his sons), and Napoleon, received Freud's highest admiration. These men, unlike his father, could fight back. In his youth, Freud had ambitions of being a great general and was responsible, at the age of ten, for naming his brother Alexander, after Alexander the Great. His very system of thought, with its frequent use of the language and imagery of warfare, was a kind of intellectual military operation—he described himself once as a "conquistador." At the end of his life, during the night journey across the Channel to England, Freud dreamed that he was landing at Pevensey. When he related this dream to his son, he explained that Pevensey was where William the Conqueror had landed in 1066. These heroes and their bravery were as far removed from the character and life of Jakob Freud as is imaginable.

BUT Freud was more like his father than he dared admit. For all his unconscious quarrels with his father, he loved him deeply. His anger at his father for remaining passive in the face of anti-Semitism is, in a deeper sense, an assertion of love; the thought of his father humiliated was unbearable to Freud. Moreover, his love for his father was bound up inextricably with the issue of Jewishness. As he himself suffered from anti-Semitic prejudice, it is probable that, to some extent, feelings and thoughts which Freud interprets as signs of hostility toward his father, and which he generalizes into a universal human problem, reflect the peculiar conditions of being Jewish in antipathetic surroundings. Freud's very theories can be seen as an implicit attack upon anti-Semitism, and upon human prejudice in general, for his central assumption is that all men are driven by the same impulses and are, in a sense, equally wicked; therefore, it is ludicrous for any

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set of men to regard themselves as racially superior.

Freud believed that the Gentile world was, on the whole, anti-Semitic. (This, ironically, more than anything else, gave him a sense of identity as a Jew.) After seeing Herzl's play, *Das Neue Ghetto*, Freud had the following dream: "On account of certain events which had taken place in the city of Rome, it had become necessary to remove the children to safety, and this was done. . . . I was sitting on the edge of a fountain and was greatly depressed and almost in tears." Freud comments that the dream alludes to the Psalm beginning, "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion," and that the dream-thoughts involve "the Jewish question, concern about the future of one's children to whom one cannot give a country of their own." Freud was deeply moved by a dream in which the apparition of Herzl appeared to him and spoke of the perilous condition of the Jewish people, and the need to act immediately if they were to be saved.

Freud's famous "revolutionary" dream shows how hatred of the father and the effects of anti-Semitism are intertwined. According to Freud, this dream goes back to his rebellion against his father. Nevertheless, certain aspects of it point more directly to problems caused by anti-Semitism. During the dream, Freud, to his surprise, expresses fierce German nationalist feeling. He then finds that the gates to the university and the main train station are "cordoned off." He can use only the local railroad. The dream ends with Freud standing at a main-line station, hoping to "get away" with the help of his invalid father, while giving vent, through association, to immense hostility toward him.

In the dream, Freud's surprise at showing patriotic feeling can be explained by the fact that he is a Jew whose country sanctions discriminations which "cordon" him off from a normal life and from gaining advancement and recognition. In the dream he can use only the local line (indeed, the local Jews of Vienna, especially the B'nai B'rith, were the only ones who valued his work at the start). Freud's aggresssion toward his father later in the dream might, therefore, be caused partly by anti-Semitism which embittered his life, frustrated his ambitions, and worsened the conflict with his father. Ironically, the discovery of this aggression did enable Freud to "get away," and gain international recognition along the "main line" of Western thought. He himself interpreted the aggression as a symptom of the Oedipus complex, a universal phenomenon, but in doing so he suppressed the "local" or circumstantial factors having to do with his Jewish background.

FREUD's sensitivity about his origins was so acute that he hardly spoke of them, even to his children. Like his Viennese contemporary, Gustav Mahler (who, however, was a convert to Christianity), he obliterated practically everything pertaining to his early life. This is astonishing in view of the importance which Freud attached to childhood and family background. His entire life was a denial of his roots. While he often admitted the general social and psychological importance of his Jewishness, he never acknowledged the normative and healthy aspects of the tradition which he rescinded, or publicized his enormous debt to it.

In utterly rejecting Jewish ritual, Freud protested too much. He ignored the practical importance of the talmudic background to his way of thinking. He did not openly concede that he had probably inherited his prodigious memory and analytical ability from his rabbinic ancestors. He did not consider seriously that the psychoanalytic role he had created for himself was in some ways similar to that of the Eastern European rabbi, who often advised members of his congregation in their personal lives. And, while he was highly critical of his father's education, he did not mention how much he owed to the educational tradition sustained by the Jewish religion, which for hundreds of years had made the Jews the only large group in Europe among whom illiteracy was practically unknown.

It is impossible to escape the conclusion that Freud probably chose to downplay his Jewishness and the role of anti-Semitism and Jewish self-hatred in stimulating conflict with his father for fear of diverting attention from the allegedly universal nature of the Oedipus complex. Yet the fact remains that Freud's hatred of his father was caused not only by incestuous rivalry, but also by the extraordinary social conditions of the Jews in 19th-century Europe, and the vast cultural and psychological changes that they underwent in the passage to modernity.

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The Facts About Terrorism

Charles Horner

IN THE February 1980 issue of *Encounter*, there is a small item drawn from the London *Daily Mail* which appends a footnote to last August's murder of Lord Louis Mountbatten. Two of the sentences stand out: "Thomas McMahon, aged 31, was found guilty of Lord Mountbatten's murder by three judges at the anti-terrorist Special Criminal Court in Dublin. The loss of McMahon, whose remote control bomb-making skills were perfected under Russian supervision during a spell of training in Libya, is a big blow to the provisionals." Russian supervision; training in Libya: a clause between commas is dropped on us in a way that makes it seem entirely matter-of-fact.

Mountbatten's death was a horrifying crime, an event of international significance, "propaganda of the deed" which touched the British royal family. One would think that the possibility, even a remote one, of Russian and Libyan complicity belongs in something other than a subordinate clause. For questions come immediately to mind. What is the source of the statement? Is it a piece of information that emerged during McMahon's trial? Is it the result of an inspired leak from "intelligence sources"? Is it something that McMahon himself has admitted? And, if there is any truth whatever to the allegation, has it caused any strain in the diplomatic relations between Britain and the Soviet Union?

A researcher sufficiently curious and energetic could probably track down the answers to all these questions. But why is that necessary? If it is true that two sovereign governments were patrons of the man who murdered Mountbatten, why has this made such a slight impression on us?

It is not, surely, because no one is interested in terrorism. On the contrary: terrorism has been studied almost to death. We know its history and its "philosophy." The terrorist as a "type" is present in our literature and in our motion pictures; he has held our attention during extended live television coverage. There have been hundreds of pages of congressional testimony on the subject, and experts have sketched out in great detail the composite psychological profile of the air pirate, the bomber, the assassin, the hostage-taker.

But just when we think there is nothing left to know, we encounter what may be a new phenomenon, one upsetting to the various stereotypes built up over the years. The Arab "rejectionist," the Uruguayan "liberationist," the Basque "separatist" are, of course, frightening. But they are by now familiar. Certainly, we do not think of them as carefully created constructs of someone else's "grand design." We think of terror as an activity for deranged amateurs, however cold-blooded, a problem for painstaking police work more than a subject for foreign policy. We have found a place on our agenda for the "grievances" of terrorists, but no place as yet for the apparent role that certain governments play in their deeds. Allegations of government involvement, even on those rare occasions when they are "sensationalized," are invariably dropped. In an era where nothing having to do with government seems to remain secret very long, investigations into any "terrorist international" quickly succumb to a general lack of public interest.

It has been suggested that there are those who know more than they are telling, and that information about state-supported terrorism is being suppressed by Western governments for reasons of state. Robert Moss of the *Economist* has spoken of a "conspiracy of silence" about the evidence of Soviet involvement in terrorism, which operates in order to preserve the appearance of détente. The presumption is that democratic publics would be appalled if they knew the facts, that they would generate pressures on their respective governments for firmer policies against the Soviet Union which those governments, for one reason or another, do not wish to pursue. If this is so, one need only get the facts out and things will change in response

But, unhappily, there is also much to suggest that such implied faith in the good sense of the public is misplaced, and that what we are dealing with is not so much a conspiracy of silence as a popular will to obtuseness. As in the case of Thomas McMahon, the international connections may be well known—worse, they may even be taken for granted—but the public outrage which the Foreign Office ought to fear fails to materialize.

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This is not very unusual, especially when the netherworld of international affairs comes into play. Though spy stories, for example, comprise a publishing industry all their own, only rarely is espionage in the real world viewed as a serious threat. When scandals emerge, as in the Philby case in England, observers are more apt to be interested in the sociology of the event than in its impact on national security. So too in the United States. In the past few years, there have been two major cases involving Soviet espionage directed against the country's most sensitive satellite reconnaissance capability, but the news stories cause hardly a ripple. In a related realm, no one has paid much attention to the revelation that the Soviets have been using sophisticated electronic equipment to monitor the telephone conversations of American citizens. Probably hundreds of thousands of Americans have been spied on in this manner over the years. Yet neither when Nelson Rockefeller's investigative commission mentioned it in a report on the CIA in 1975, nor when President Carter alluded to it in 1977, nor when Senator Daniel P. Moynihan introduced a bill to oblige the government to deal with this problem, did anyone take much notice.

Much as we seem fascinated by the cloak and the dagger, then, our appreciation of what they may actually mean to us is very underdeveloped. It is not much different with terrorism. For example, it is possible for the public to subscribe to an ongoing series of reports published by the National Foreign Assessment Center of the Central Intelligence Agency. (These "research papers," as many as forty-five per year, cover the gamut of international issues.) In March 1979, the agency reported on "International Terrorism in 1978," providing six graphs, eight tables, and other explanatory material. "For the year as a whole," the CIA found that "there was an increase in the number of international incidents and their attendant casualties, matching the levels observed in the latter part of 1977. . . . Terrorists continue to prefer operations in the industrialized democracies of Western Europe and North America. More than half of all incidents were recorded in these regions. . . . There were more attacks than the previous year, both in relative and absolute terms, on U.S. citizens and property. . . ."

The cumulative figures for the decade 1968-78 concerning the nationality of victims of international terrorist attacks show 1,275 North Americans, 41.9 per cent of the total; 990 Western Europeans, 32.5 per cent of the total; and 150 Soviets and East Europeans, 4.9 per cent of the total. Of the 3,043 terrorist attacks during this period, only 12 occurred in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Of course, this may be a misleading way of looking at even circumstantial evidence, for these terrorist groups have not been all that successful inside the United States either. In the same ten-year period, when there were 1,275 attacks directed against U.S. "targets," only 84 occurred inside North America. The other 1,200 or so took place in other parts of the world. "Out there," where everyone is fair game, one assumes that there might also have been some attacks directed against Soviet or East European "targets." Unfortunately, the CIA paper does not record how many there were. Yet one has the impression that Communist nationals and property are comparatively safe, even outside the security blanket that can be thrown over them by the police states at home.

It would seem, therefore, that contemporary terrorists, in the main, have few enemies in the East, which is why it is only natural to wonder how many friends they may have there. Interestingly, what appears to hold true statistically on a global basis also holds true domestically. In Italy, for example, there have been, according to one computation, 116 killed and 365 wounded as a result of terrorist attacks in the period 1970-79. Of these, only one of the murder victims and only two of the other casualties were associated with the Italian Communist party.

THE CIA's published study devotes three paragraphs to what it calls "patron state support." We learn that "Radical Arab states opposed to a political settlement with Israel have continued to work closely with extremist Palestinian terrorist groups." Iraq's role is described as "particularly noteworthy." Libya is also mentioned, but, surprisingly, as playing an anti-terrorist role. "In November [1978], Colonel Qaddafi met with the West German Interior Minister to discuss closer cooperation against terrorists. In December, the Libyan Interior Minister vowed to arrest and extradite any German terrorists seeking refuge." So far as the Soviets and East Europeans are concerned, the CIA also noted some "favorable signs." "The Bulgarians, clearly with Soviet approval, allowed a West German team to arrest the Red Army Faction member Till Meyer and his anarchist associates. The Yugoslavs also arrested four West German terrorists, but allowed them to travel to an undisclosed country in retaliation for Bonn's denial of Belgrade's request for the return of several Croatian terrorists. . . . [I]t is not clear whether the Soviet and East European governments will extend their concern beyond West German radicals and also help to curb Arab terrorist activities."

Like the case of Thomas McMahon with which we began, these remarks are more disingenuous than they seem at first glance to be. One wonders about the way Soviet and East European "concern" can be made manifest, about the circumstances which allow the Soviets to influence the behavior of groups as different as West Germans and Palestinian Arabs. In short, the reassurance offered by the CIA itself shows why one ought to be worried. What can be damped down by state policies can also be started up again at the convenience of those same state agencies.

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In other words, what the CIA is implicitly describing is the creation of a significant form of leverage for one state to use against another. It partakes of the classical paradigm of East-West negotiations, and is immediately recognizable: one party starts to do things which should not be done in the first place; then, when it agrees to limit, at least temporarily, its improper activities, it can be praised for its moderation, and even rewarded for it.

IT HAS become customary for the West German government to publish a kind of balance sheet on terrorism at the end of each year. In December 1979, Serge D'Adesky of the Los Angeles *Times*, drawing on one of these, reported from Munich that "the last of the sensational acts of terrorism in West Germany took place more than two years ago. . . . Since then, the only signs of the continued existence in West Germany of the leftist terror organizations . . . have been an occasional bank robbery or a bloody exchange of bullets with the police after an attempted arrest." The German government believes that, in the 1970's, much of the financial support for terrorist activity had come from Libya and Iraq. The average terrorist needs about $50,000 per year to sustain life in the underground—which can require automobiles, several residences, weapons, forged documents, and so forth. When foreign sources dry up—as they evidently did—the terrorists must rely on bank robberies. Therefore, "police hope that the terrorists will make unusual mistakes, leading to their capture."

Even if we can attribute the sputtering state of contemporary West German terrorism—after more than a decade of considerable violence—to greater international "cooperation," what are we to conclude from this? The last thing we seem able to conclude is that this series of events marks a reduced international reliance on terrorism as a method of politics. Terrorism declines in West Germany but it increases elsewhere, reflecting not a new international environment as such, but rather a shifting geopolitical emphasis born of new strategic opportunities.

Thus: on April 16, 1980, U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Samuel Novello, fifty-six, of Erie, Pennsylvania, was shot and killed in an ambush in Istanbul. The perpetrators, in the judgment of Turkish authorities, were members of the Marxist-Leninist Armed Propaganda Union, an organization which, during the preceding year, had claimed "credit" for the murders of six other Americans in Turkey. In January, the same group took responsibility for the murder of the manager of El Al airline's Istanbul office, a "punishment" to Israel for its "oppression" of Palestinians.

It turns out that in the past two years about 2,500 people have lost their lives in Turkey as a result of political violence of one kind or another, including about 400 political assassinations. And, once again, the violence becomes internationalized. On March 10, 1980, a bomb explodes in the Piazza della Republica in Rome, killing two and injuring eleven others. The Armenian Secret Army takes responsibility, calling the blast "a warning to Turkish fascism and Italian imperialism which ignore the Armenian cause." Predictably, the Turks blame the Greeks, alleging that Greek Cypriots are supporting and even instigating such attacks, especially those which have taken the lives of almost a dozen Turkish diplomats since 1973. The Cypriots deny it. But whatever the precise details, it is apparent that Turkey, a strategically situated country, is under assault from terrorism, both "revolutionary" and "separatist."

Sooner or later, the Turks, like their West German NATO allies, may come to produce a scoreboard showing their own progress in restoring a measure of stability and personal security to their country. For the Turkish foreign ministry, it is only a question of knowing where to look, how to discover the people who ought to be approached, and then determining whether they are amenable, for reasons of their own, to negotiations. This should not prove all that difficult for a government, especially when we consider how much individual reporters working on their own have been able to unearth. In a compendium prepared for the "Terrorism and Totalitarianism" conference, Thomas Hyde assembled numerous examples from the world press detailing the international connections of terrorist groups. In addition to those, one can also note a not unrepresentative account that appeared in the well-known Milan newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*, on August 30, 1979:

> The last congress of the international terrorist groups was held at Beirut in September 1978. Delegates were present from the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Red Brigades (Italy), the IRA [Irish Republican Army] (Ulster), the Baader-Meinhof group (Germany), the Red Army Faction (Germany), the Montoneros (Argentina), the ETA [Basque Socialist Separatist Group] (Spain), and the Red Army Group (Japan). . . .
>
> [I]t is the PLO that finances the operations of most of the other terrorist groups of the Middle East, distributing among them an amount estimated at $300 million (about 246 billion lire). Where does this money come from and where does it go? The bank of the terrorist groups of the Middle East is the National Palestinian Fund, created by the PLO, which meets regularly; its last meeting was held at Damascus in January. . . .
>
> The Arab countries that make regular contributions to the Palestinian National Fund are Syria, Iraq, Libya, and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. Syria pays for the most part in kind rather than in cash, arguing that in sheltering the Palestinian Liberation Army the country is contributing as much if not more. . . .
>
> The Russians, either directly or through their Cuban satellites, have always been active supporters of the various liberation movements, both with money and by furnishing services [read: training].

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At this very moment in South Yemen, in three camps at Hauf, Mukalla, and Al-Gheidha, about 700 Cubans, backed up by 1,500 Soviets and 116 East Germans, are training terrorist groups from all over the world. Recent trainees at these camps have included members of the German Red Army Faction and of the South Moluccans of the Netherlands. In addition, a new Dutch terrorist group returned home this month after intensive training. It is said that this group, the Rood Verzetsfront, or Red Resistance Front, numbers only a dozen members, and although little is known about them, the anti-terrorist services in Europe expect that within the next few weeks they will put the lessons they learned into practice.

It appears that another terrorist training camp, 300 kilometers south of Tripoli, in the locality of Sebhah, has put members of the IRA and of Palestinian groups through its training program. . . .

WITHIN a month, a more detailed account appeared of the most serious of the above allegations, namely, the Soviet-Palestinian connection. Writing in *New York* magazine (September 24, 1979), Herbert Krosney, who had produced a television documentary on the PLO for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, concluded that "there is no doubt that Russia has taken an active role in assisting and providing military aid to the Palestinian terrorists. . . . Since 1974, sources say, as many as 1,000 Palestinians have been sent to the Soviet Union and other Eastern-bloc countries for clandestine training in either Russian military or KGB (secret police) camps."

Krosney's "sources" describe one such training camp at the Soviet foreign-military academy of Sanprobal, near Simferapol on the Black Sea:

> There, for the next six months, the Palestinians —along with activists from nations such as Libya, Iraq, South Yemen, and Algeria—were given an arduous course of study, including basic military field exercises, communications techniques, and lectures in theory. But at the heart of all this instruction came extensive "engineering" classes —just the sort which make a terrorist's eyes start to glow.
>
> The syllabus, according to the report, included the following:
> • study of regular and electronic detonators;
> • training in chemical and biological warfare;
> • production of incendiary devices;
> • preparation of an electrical charge by means of a detonator;
> • study of exploding metals;
> • crossing rivers by means of rubber or wooden boats;
> • blowing up wood by means of a charge;
> • study of fuse types: "detonating cord-red, instantaneous fuse-red, safety fuse-black";
> • blowing up vehicles and ammunition dumps;
> • preparation of anti-personnel mine fields.

The general point here was confirmed by the PLO's United Nations Observer, Zehdi Terzi, in an interview with Marilyn Berger of the Public Broadcasting Service, broadcast on September 25, 1979:

> BERGER: Can you tell me what kind of support the Soviet Union gives to your organization?
>
> TERZI: Well, the Soviet Union, and all the Socialist countries . . . they give us full support—diplomatic, moral, educational, and also they open their military academies to some of our freedom fighters.
>
> BERGER: And the military equipment, is that support given directly to the PLO or . . .?
>
> TERZI: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. We're getting our—those machine guns and RPG's and all that. . . .
>
> BERGER: Explosives?
>
> TERZI: . . . Explosives, yes.
>
> BERGER: Well, some American analysts suggest that much of the equipment is funneled through the existing states of the region.
>
> TERZI: Oh, we get our direct consignments that come to the PLO.
>
> BERGER: It is consigned to you?
>
> TERZI: Yes, it is.

This interview, for all its confirmation of a supposedly controversial point, proves to be something of a disappointment. Journalists on at least two continents have been stalking the story, but all that is necessary is for one of them to ask a man who knows, and the "dirty little secret" is affirmed, once again in the most offhand fashion.

Of course, there was another route open to Terzi, which was to deny it all, to strike a pose of righteous indignation, and dismiss the accusations as propaganda and slander. And so we must ask: why does he want us to know that the Soviet Union trains and arms the PLO? More to the point, why do the Soviets want us to know this? For surely, if they did not, they would have spread the word long ago to their friends in the PLO that such matters were not to be discussed.

The answer would seem to be that the assertion of ties between a terrorist organization and the Soviet Union, instead of inspiring outrage and horror, now affords greater legitimacy to the terrorists and greater leverage to the Soviets. So far as the terrorists are concerned, the distinction between serious groups and rank amateurs on the world scene is whether or not they can come to be adopted by the premier Communist power. In the PLO's case, this marks a milestone in its evolution from outlaw status to quasi-state apparatus—almost to a government-in-exile. By implying that it treats with the Soviet Union almost on the basis of "state-to-state" relations, it announces a kind of diplomatic recognition that has been afforded to it, which others can then afford in like measure. An acknowledgment that it receives foreign aid, as it were, makes the PLO a member of the socialist camp.

In other words, the PLO does not discredit itself

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or the Soviet Union by acknowledging that there is indeed such a thing as state-supported terrorism. Rather, it confirms that it is possible to create a state out of terrorism—a new stage, one suspects, in the theory and practice of revolution. All this has the further advantage of giving to groups like the PLO a form of international respectability. The facts, when finally revealed, do something very different from what was expected of them at the beginning. Far from demeaning the PLO in the eyes of the Western democracies, they elevate it. The Soviets understand that this is true, and they see their own influence grow thereby. They become our guide in these matters; those whom they "recognize" politically first, we will recognize diplomatically in our turn—sooner or later. Put more concretely, it is at precisely the point when the Western democracies can no longer deny the facts of the relationship between the PLO and the Soviet Union that they begin to afford the organization greater respectability.

IN SHORT, there is something here akin to a repeating decimal. At first, the Western world persists in denying the obvious. Almost in exasperation, one again suspects, both terrorist and patron decide to beat us over the head with it. Understanding the contemporary climate of opinion much better than we ourselves do, they may realize that once Western governments get the message, they will be pressured not to resist, but to succumb. Having succumbed, they can then return to ignoring the obvious.

In this, the PLO may be nothing but the vanguard in a new international trend. Everett G. Martin, writing from Bogota, Colombia, in the *Wall Street Journal* of April 15, 1980, summarizes a debate among knowledgeable observers about the meaning of recent terrorist activity in Latin America (in Bogota, "militants" held as many as nineteen diplomats, including U.S. Ambassador Diego Asencio, inside the embassy of the Dominican Republic between February 27 and April 27, 1980):

> The theory of Soviet involvement here in Bogota and elsewhere in Latin America is highly controversial and hotly disputed. The U.S. State Department, for example, officially gives little credence to the idea that Russians or Russian puppets (Cubans, for example) are lurking behind every Latin American bush. True, officials from the State and Defense departments recently told a congressional committee that Cuba has been involved in a plot to help overthrow the government in El Salvador; but Frank Perez, deputy director of the State Department's office to combat terrorism, says he sees no evidence of an outside hand in the Bogota takeover and suggests that the terrorists are merely "following the fad" of embassy takeovers. . . .
>
> "The degree of Soviet involvement [in terrorist incidents such as that in Bogota] is a major debating point," says Brian Jenkins of the Rand Corporation, the prominent research firm. "One extreme says that all terrorist acts are centrally directed from Moscow. The other says that it is all spontaneous, and one group copies another like a fad. I don't buy either extreme.
>
> "I believe we have a combination of fad and some attempt to control and direct terrorists by the Soviet Union." . . .
>
> Ernest Evans, research assistant at the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based liberal research organization, has a different viewpoint on the Soviet role in worldwide terrorism. "There is no doubt that they are playing a role," he says, "but their basic attitude is still one of coordination of the various movements because they are basically uncomfortable with this kind of action, and it is ideologically unpalatable to them." He adds: "I think that they would really prefer good relations with the established states in Latin America rather than with some group up in the mountains." . . .

It is indeed more than conceivable that the Soviets wish to do business with the established governments of Latin America. Yet it is their presumed relationship with either "revolutionaries," or "separatists," or both, which can make that business much easier to transact. Historically, in the Soviet approach to these matters, there is nothing inconsistent about backing separatists on the one hand, so that the Soviets can come to the aid of an embattled central government on the other. We have seen this in Ethiopia, and we certainly see it today in Iran. But its value as a tactic is enhanced precisely when the government in question knows the relationship between its opponents and the Soviet Union.

Once again, this is a case where secrecy as such does not necessarily favor Soviet objectives; rather, a straightforward revelation can make the point far more effectively and convincingly than vague innuendo. As much as we admire the skills of our intelligence organizations in developing the "damning" facts, one doubts that they would know as much as they do without the *de facto* cooperation of the Soviets themselves. Such verification is not so very different from what we know at the highest level of potential violence, nuclear war itself. There, the Soviets cooperate in revealing the size of their forces because, were we to remain ignorant, we would be neither deterred, nor impressed, nor intimidated.

We may even have reached a point where embattled governments, given the choice, will prefer state-sponsored terrorism to the more unpredictable homegrown variety. With the former one at least has a way of getting a proverbial handle on the problem. Seen in this light, the expansion of Soviet influence among the world's terrorist organizations—Soviet help in bringing them to a higher state of development and maturity—will surely be welcomed by some as the way to *restrain* terrorism. One may have to pay a price for securing Soviet cooperation, of course, but that price may come to be seen as far lower than the price of dealing with individuals and small groups

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lacking in discipline. Indeed, one feels that this is what the Soviets hope and expect, which is why they may have gotten into the business in the first place.

THERE is a final question. Is it possible that an examination of state support for the terrorist acts of quasi-independent organizations may in fact be directed toward a transitory phenomenon? Discussion, analysis, and speculation are all being overtaken by events, for certain governments have begun to act directly, without relying on intermediaries.

This is certainly the most conspicuous feature of the current Iran crisis, where the hostage-taking technique, once employed by the isolated cell of the "alienated" and the "powerless," is appropriated by a sitting government, thereby becoming official state policy. It is now respectable to cut out the middleman. The so-called "militants" holding the American embassy in Teheran are, to some extent certainly, willing to do the bidding of the Iranian authorities. More to the point, three American diplomats, including chargé d'affaires Bruce Laingen, are imprisoned in the Iranian foreign ministry itself. The government in Iran has become the terrorist, the server of demands upon the government of its victims.

The government of Libya also seems on the road to transforming its role from one of patron to direct agent. In April, Colonel Qaddafi threatened to "liquidate" all dissident Libyans who did not return home by the middle of May. Since then, four prominent Libyans known to be critics of the Qaddafi regime have been murdered in Europe. Calling them "would-be assassins," President Carter had four Libyan diplomats expelled for engaging in a campaign to intimidate Libyan students living in the U.S. Britain, too, expelled four Libyan diplomats, accusing them of "harassing" Libyan expatriates in England.

A similar progression, leading to the elimination of the middle man by the state, may be seen in the murder of the United States diplomats overseas. In 1968, John Gordon Mein, our ambassador in Guatemala, was murdered in Guatemala City. In 1973, Cleo Noel, our ambassador in the Sudan, and his deputy, George Moore, were murdered in Khartoum. In 1974, our ambassador in Cyprus, Richard Davies, was murdered in Nicosia. In June 1976, Francis Meloy, our ambassador in Lebanon, and economic counselor Frederick Waring, were murdered in downtown Beirut. Most recently, Adolph Dubs, our ambassador in Afghanistan, was murdered in Kabul in February 1979. This last crime can be taken as the new stage, for it is understood—to borrow a phrase from a February 14, 1979 State Department report on the circumstances—that Soviet advisers played an "operational role" in Ambassador Dubs's death. The significance of this particular act was perhaps not apparent at the time, but given the events that have intervened since, it seems to make more "sense."

Yet while the West engages in a tortuous debate over the degree of Soviet involvement in international terrorism, the Soviet Union cynically portrays the United States as the culprit. On February 19, 1980, the Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives released a report prepared by the CIA on a variety of clandestine Soviet propaganda activities directed against the United States. Among other things, the report alleges that the Soviets have forged documents in order to link the United States with international terrorist acts, including the murder of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro in 1978. To do this, the Soviets are said to have produced bogus U.S. Army field manuals and State Department documents. One can only speculate on the motives of the CIA in agreeing to the public release of this report. Perhaps it is too much of a comment on the times to suggest that the CIA's desire for self-protection may have been involved. For one could well imagine how such Soviet-inspired allegations could readily find their way into the European press, thence to the United States, leading to heated urgings that Congress investigate the possible role of the CIA in the murder of Aldo Moro.

OVERALL, what has been missing in our confrontation with the phenomenon of Soviet-supported terrorism is not fact, but comprehension. Facts are believed when a framework exists that will allow for their acceptance. Acceptance of facts can lead either to resistance or resignation. After all, the facts of the Soviet build-up of armored, naval, and strategic-nuclear forces have been available for ten years, but grudging acceptance of them has come only recently; and whether those facts will produce rearmament or retreat is far from clear. A concomitant Soviet interest in expanding its chemical and bacteriological warfare capabilities has also been noted, but it has not yet been internalized in the West. Seen in this general context, the fact that Soviet involvement in international terrorism has failed to make any real impression on Western politics—except to increase the pressures for accommodation—is hardly surprising, but no less dangerous.

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The New Black Intellectuals

Murray Friedman

FOLLOWING the race riots of the mid-1960's, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the famous Kerner Commission) declared that this country had become increasingly two societies, one white and the other black, and it identified white racism as the major cause of the strife between the two. The Commission called for a broad series of government initiatives to overcome segregation and relieve the plight of poor blacks in housing, education, and jobs.

In the following decade, many efforts were undertaken to follow both the Kerner Commission's analysis and its prescription for cure. At the close of the 70's, however, though the black middle class had grown in size, prosperity, and influence, the problems of the black poor seemed no nearer solution. According to the Civil Rights Commission in 1977, nearly three-quarters of the black children in the nation's 26 largest cities attended schools with 90 to 100 per-cent minority enrollments. And while there had been progress on the political front, as witnessed by the growing number of cities headed by black mayors, these mayors had come to power at a time when large sectors of the white and (increasingly) black middle class were fleeing and the urban economy had precipitously declined. In 23 of 26 medium and large cities with black mayors, the Joint Center for Political Studies reported in 1975, 16 ranked among the poorest of all American cities, nearly one-half had undergone sharp population declines in the previous decade, and in most of them housing was relatively old.

In its study, *The State of Black America, 1978,* the Urban League charged that the situation facing blacks had actually grown worse since the racial disorders of the 60's. While there were some signs of progress, according to the Urban League, joblessness was felt across the board—among black women, black teen-agers, and adult men—and would continue unless "some special arrangements are made." What these "special arrangements" might be was described by James R. Dumpson, former Commissioner of Social Services and Administrator of Human Resources for New York City, who argued that "For the blacks in the United States . . . it is posited here that only an affirmative federal government has provided and can continue to provide the opportunities for individual and collective self-realization for black Americans."

As we enter the 80's, then, the civil-rights leadership would still seem as committed as ever to an analysis of what ails us—namely, entrenched racism—and a social strategy to deal with it—namely, massive and continuing government intervention—developed twenty or thirty years ago and enshrined as dogma in the Kerner Commission report. The trouble with the analysis, however, is that it no longer speaks to the social, psychological, and economic changes that have taken place in American life in the intervening years; and the trouble with the strategy, as even its adherents implicitly acknowledge in the figures they cite, is that it has failed to achieve the broad results it once promised.

By the late 60's and early 70's, a number of social scientists committed to the goals of racial progress had already begun to raise questions about this anomalous situation. In a widely discussed article in COMMENTARY, for example, Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon argued that as a result of the gains in civil rights and the post-World War II economic expansion, a significant black middle class had arisen which, they believed, had to be taken account of in our perceptions of social reality.* Daniel P. Moynihan, who had helped to draft the original anti-poverty legislation in the early 60's, wrote a postscript on the War on Poverty, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding,* where he criticized the terms in which the effort had been formulated and analyzed the factors that doomed it to failure. The huge *Equal Educational Opportunity Survey* commissioned by Congress and prepared by a research team headed by James Coleman concluded that differences in academic achievement could be explained mainly by family background and social circumstances of

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* "Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric," April 1973.

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students and had little to do with differences in school resources, i.e., the extent and amount of government intervention and funding. Later, Coleman backed away from one conclusion many had drawn from this study—that integration automatically improved the educational prospects of disadvantaged blacks. Nathan Glazer, in *Affirmative Discrimination,* challenged the usefulness and wisdom of racial balancing and busing to achieve integration in the schools, as well as affirmative-action programs that relied heavily on quotas and preferential treatment to advance persons from designated groups.

For their efforts, these men came under severe attack. Moynihan, particularly, was vilified for *The Negro Family,* a report he wrote as an Assistant Secretary of Labor for President Johnson, and again for a memo he prepared in the late 60's for President Nixon advocating a cooling of racial rhetoric while maintaining the positive programs of the federal government (Moynihan in those years was developing a family-assistance plan intended to provide an economic floor under the working and non-working poor). These scholars were charged with consciously betraying the effort to achieve greater equality and relieve the economic disadvantages of minorities. They were also criticized in some liberal circles and by black activists for helping to create and provide a rationale for a new "conservatism." As a result, it soon became difficult for white scholars who departed from the conventional wisdom on these matters to analyze the problems confronting blacks without being denounced as apologists for the status quo or worse. And this in turn has contributed to the impasse at which American liberalism finds itself today.

Yet just as some white social scientists may have begun to hold back in public criticism of the faulty analyses and unsuccessful strategies of the recent past, a number of black social scientists have appeared on the scene who labor under no such inhibitions. The best known among them are William Julius Wilson, professor and chairman of the department of sociology at the University of Chicago; Thomas Sowell, professor of economics at the University of California at Los Angeles; Walter Williams, an economics professor at Temple University in Philadelphia; and Derrick A. Bell, Jr., professor of law at Harvard. These men do not share a common social or political philosophy. At important points, they differ sharply from one another. What permits them to be classed together, however, is that in their work on poverty they have avoided generalized indictments of American society and eschewed purely racial explanations of the plight of poor blacks. They tend to see society as an intricate mosaic of racial, religious, and ethnic groups as well as of social classes, and they have focused mainly on economic and structural analyses of the problems of blacks, to which they offer pragmatic responses.

Increasingly, the work of these men is receiving attention outside social-scientific and professional journals. Sowell, especially, has appeared in such places as the New York *Times* and the Los Angeles *Times,* with pieces critical of the favored current approaches of establishment civil-rights leaders. Articles by Williams have recently appeared in the *Wall Street Journal, Newsweek,* and the *Reader's Digest.* On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Brown* school desegregation decision last year, the *Nation* featured a debate between Bell and the psychologist, Kenneth Clark; the two differed sharply on the effects of the decision. Wilson's book, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions,* published in 1978, provoked considerable discussion in newspaper and magazine articles and editorials and led to a two-day symposium sponsored by the Afro-American Studies Department of the University of Pennsylvania that attracted a number of important white and black intellectuals. In his introduction to the proceedings of the symposium, Professor Joseph R. Washington, Jr. measured the importance of the book by "the extent to which many serious men and women throughout the nation have been pressed to evaluate the depth and breadth of social change bearing upon contemporary black Americans in response to the conclusions reached [by Wilson] by way of economic and sociological analysis." Clearly, what these social scientists have to say is worth examining.

In *The Declining Significance of Race,* Wilson seeks to connect changes in black-white relations with changes in the overall American social structure. He describes three stages of American development—pre-industrial, industrial, and modern industrial—and shows for each period how shifts in the system of production and in government have influenced race and class relations. But it is his treatment of the modern era that has received all the attention. Summarizing his views, he contends:

> [I]n the earlier periods, whether one focuses on the way race relations were structured by the economy or by the state or by both, racial oppression (ranging from exploitation of black labor by the economic elite to the elimination of black competition, especially economic competition by the white masses) was a characteristic and important aspect of life. However, . . . in the modern industrial period the economy and the state have, in relatively independent ways, shifted the basis of racial antagonisms away from black/white economic contact to social, political, and community issues. The net effect is a growing class division among blacks, a situation, in other words, in which economic class has been elevated to a position of greater importance than that of race in determining individual black opportunities for living conditions and personal life experiences.

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As a result of the shift away from manufacturing to greater reliance on the service sector of the economy, Wilson argues, success has come to be increasingly dependent on educational criteria that did not apply in the pre-industrial and industrial eras. With the dismantling of most of the formal and informal machinery of segregation and discrimination in the 50's and 60's, opportunities became available to educated blacks to enter higher-paying professional and managerial positions. At the same time, however, the position of blacks at the lower end of the social and economic scale deteriorated further, as evidenced in high rates of unemployment, especially of the young, "slowing the movement out of poverty, increasing [the] number of female-headed households, and expanding welfare rolls." The picture today is that "young college-educated blacks now receive roughly the same salaries as young college-educated whites," while "young poor blacks earn substantially less than their white counterparts."

An elaborate class structure has developed in the black community, Wilson suggests, with three distinguishable groups—an underclass population of largely unskilled laborers, domestic workers, and welfare recipients; a stable working-class population of largely semi-skilled, blue-collar workers; and a middle-class population of skilled blue- and white-collar workers. Wilson estimates that roughly 35 per cent of blacks today are in the underclass, some 30 per cent in the working class, and about 35 per cent in the middle class.

Thus, to talk about the "black experience" today as if it were a monolithic phenomenon is, according to Wilson, to commit a crucial analytical error. And to focus on the forces of segregation and racial discrimination that in the past helped to create the black underclass is to miss the salient point. For "even if all racial discrimination in labor-market practices were eliminated tomorrow," Wilson writes, "economic conditions [of poor blacks] would not significantly improve because of structural barriers to decent jobs." Wilson does not deny the continued existence of various forms of prejudice and discrimination experienced by the black middle class, but he believes that "for the first time in American history, class issues can meaningfully compete with race issues in the way individual blacks develop or maintain a sense of group position."

As an economist, Walter Williams has paid particular attention to the problems of the black poor. He believes these problems have in large measure *resulted* from interference by government and organized labor. In an article, "Government Sanctioned Restraints That Reduce Economic Opportunities for Minorities" (*Policy Review*, Fall 1977), he cites the ability of blacks to move into more affluent white neighborhoods by outbidding others for housing there, and contrasts this healthy working of the market mechanism with government programs which from 1967 to 1971 "destroyed 538,000 units of housing, replacing them with only 201,000 units. Of the number of units replaced, less than one-half were for low- and moderate-income families. What the housing policy did do was increase housing for high-income people and increase the amount of land available for office space," thus penalizing the black poor, the very people the program was intended to help.

Elsewhere Williams has decried the taxi-license requirements in New York City and Boston, which cost $60,000 and $45,000 respectively. In an earlier period, he argues, a poor immigrant could buy a used car and set himself up in the taxi business. In Washington, D.C., where the fee for owning and operating a taxi is $100, there are many more black taxi drivers than in New York and Boston—and the fares are cheaper. Williams is also critical of union requirements such as those embodied in the Davis-Bacon Act requiring contractors to pay "prevailing wages" on federally funded construction projects, a policy which inadvertently discriminates against black contractors, most of whom are non-union.

Williams's most controversial example of "racially innocent laws [that] spell disaster" is minimum-wage legislation which, he asserts, has the effect of discriminating against young people, particularly young blacks, whose unemployment rates are appallingly high. In his *Policy Review* article, he notes that legislative bodies "have the power to legislate a wage increase, but unfortunately, they have not found a way to legislate a worker-productivity increase." In smaller and more marginal businesses where jobs require less skill, an increase in wage rates beyond what is profitable for an employer to pay results in an increase in unemployment. The major bearers of the burden of the minimum wage are younger workers who are less skilled and therefore less productive or more costly to employ. Since most young people acquire skills by working at lower paying jobs, and since many young people do not yet need their wages to live on, Williams favors exempting them from the full requirements of the minimum-wage law.

To support his thesis that the various forms of interference with market mechanisms are the primary factors diminishing the prospects of blacks, Williams notes that in earlier periods, black and white youth unemployment was about equal. By 1976, however, the participation of sixteen- and seventeen-year-old blacks in the labor force was only slightly over one-half that of whites. It is difficult to maintain, he declares, that in the intervening period employers had become more racist; the answer "lies in the minimum-wage law."

One of the sharpest attacks leveled by the new black intellectuals has been on current school-integration strategies, which place the greatest emphasis on racial balance and

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on busing programs designed to achieve it. The leading figure here is Derrick A. Bell, Jr., who handled over 300 school-desegregation cases as NAACP counsel before resigning to join the Harvard law-school faculty.

"Equating racially balanced schools with the right to an equal educational opportunity is a certain formula for losing both," Bell has written. "There is simply too much evidence that integrated schools, even when achieved, do not bring [about] either interracial understanding or academic improvement for poor black children." Bell is critical of the strategy employed in a Boston school case where the court, finding the school committee guilty of blatant and overt racial discrimination, ordered racial balance "even though this required the busing of hundreds of poor black children to blue-collar white areas, where, if anything, the schools were educationally inferior to those from which the black students came."

In the fall of 1978, Bell convened at Harvard a group of eight educational specialists, both black and white. Robert L. Carter, Federal District Judge in the Southern District of New York, one of the lawyers who prepared and argued school-desegregation cases for the NAACP, declared flatly that black children "have derived little from the *Brown* decision." "The problem, at least in part, was with our strategy," he said. In believing that integration was the only means for achieving equal educational opportunity for blacks, "We were locked into an era that was already past." Charles Hamilton, professor of government at Columbia, asserted that in the desegregation process, schools have been "overloaded" with social responsibilities beyond their primary mission of teaching; he urged, instead, greater involvement of black parents in their children's education. Ronald Edmonds, senior assistant to the chancellor for instruction in New York City public schools and former director of Harvard's Urban Studies Center, suggested that strict racial balance should "take a back seat" to greater emphasis on those characteristics in schools that serve the educational needs of poor children. He reported on several studies, including his own, which have shown that effective schools for poor children—both black and white—are orderly, have strong administrators, and entertain high expectations of their students.

The new black critics are not opposed to school integration as such. Bell, for example, feels that in certain situations, particularly in smaller communities, it works. But he prefers a greater flexibility of approach. Under some circumstances, the primary focus should be on improving the quality of education in predominantly black schools. In the necessary effort to dismantle officially segregated schools in the 50's and 60's, Bell has pointed out, "integrationists painted a far worse picture of the situation than even some pre-*Brown* black schools and their products deserved." As a result, they helped to make many white and black parents reluctant to send their children to schools that were predominantly black.

"For the present, to focus on integration is a luxury only the middle class can afford," Judge Carter declared at the Harvard symposium convened by Bell. The only way to protect the educational rights of thousands of poor black children is "to concentrate on having high-quality education delivered to the schools these black children are attending and will attend at least for another generation."

Most of the new black intellectuals confine their analyses to their specialized fields. Thomas Sowell is an exception. In books like *Black Education: Myths and Tragedies* (1972), *Race and Economics* (1975), and *Essays and Data on American Ethnic Groups* (1978, with Lynn D. Collins), Sowell, who is by training an economist, ranges widely over the fields of American history, sociology, and social psychology. Much more than the others, Sowell writes out of a deep sense of anger. He believes that white liberals and black extremists have tacitly cooperated in devising policies that under the guise of helping blacks have actually done great harm.

Sowell is critical, particularly, of the "grand fallacy" that an ethnic group should be statistically "represented" in jobs, schools, and other areas of society. He shows that, quite apart from discrimination and disadvantage, such factors as the age of racial and ethnic groups, length of time spent in an urban economy, historical traditions, and "attitudes of self-reliance" play a major role in the relative income levels of different groups. "Even such major and blatant factors as color and slavery," he writes in *Race and Economics,*

> did not prevent American Negroes (who entered the economy in the 1920's) from earning higher incomes than the Puerto Ricans (who entered after World War II). Similarly, in the closing years of the 19th century, the Northern urban blacks, largely descended from the antebellum "free persons of color," were economically somewhat in advance of the white immigrants of the same period.

Sowell goes on:

> [T]he greatest dilemma in attempts to raise ethnic minority income is that those methods which have historically proved successful—self-reliance, work skills, education, business experience—are all slow developing, while those methods which are direct and immediate—job quotas, charity, subsidies, preferential treatment—tend to undermine self-reliance and pride of achievement in the long run.

Thus it is, in Sowell's view, that precisely those policies most favored today for advancing the economic and social prospects of blacks have not only failed to achieve their intended aims but have

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begun to wreak social and psychological damage on their supposed beneficiaries.

As the voice of the new black intellectuals has begun to be heard, a vigorous counterattack has gotten under way.

Wilson's book has been criticized by Charles V. Willie, a professor of education and urban studies at the Harvard School of Education; by Kenneth Clark; by the Marxist historian Philip Foner; and by Marcus Alexis, a member of the Federal Reserve Board, among others. These critics marshal a great deal of statistical information on the growth of female-headed households, unemployment, and housing to challenge Wilson's thesis of the declining influence of race. Alexis has referred to a study showing that the "cumulative impact of racial discrimination within the low-status male [black] population was estimated to result in an earnings loss of up to $1,499" yearly, and concludes that "the earnings of young black men could be increased by 31 per cent if the unexplained residuals that result largely from the various forms of racial discrimination could be eliminated."

The Urban League has argued not only that family-income inequality within the black community has grown at a greater rate than for whites, but that there is no evidence of a significant rise in the number of higher-income black families. It reports that from 1972 to 1975, black families with incomes of $15,000 or more fell from 25 to 23 per cent, and the proportion of black families above the government's higher-budget level dropped from 12 to 9 per cent from 1972 to 1976.

Wilson has responded to this by noting that the period cited by the Urban League was one of *general* recession, and that the proportion of white families with incomes of $15,000, and at the government's higher-budget level, also dropped in those years. In fact, the number of whites with incomes of $15,000 dropped even more severely from 1973 to 1975 than did the number of blacks. Taking the decade 1967-77 as a whole, he argues that the number of blacks with incomes of $15,000 to $24,999 increased slightly and the percentage of black families with incomes above $25,000 almost doubled.

In fact, the depressing statistics concerning the black poor are largely irrelevant to Wilson's case. He is well aware of the problems of unemployment and poverty in the black underclass. Nor does he deny the presence of "racial antagonism in the social-political order" or that this antagonism "feeds back to the economic sector." What he does assert is that better-educated and -trained blacks can "offset the negative consequences of racial discrimination" and have, indeed, begun to work their way out of their disadvantaged state. As for the poor, Wilson argues, their problems will not be solved either by the elimination of discrimination or by the efforts of government. As he put it in a recent speech, "The predicament of the underclass cannot be satisfactorily addressed by the mere passage of civil-rights laws or the introduction of special racial programs such as affirmative action."

Wilson's critics have also focused on his remarks about housing. Charles V. Willie, for example, stresses the "association [among] economic opportunity, educational opportunity, and residential location." When blacks are kept out of suburban areas by "snob-zoning" laws that are often disguises for racial discrimination, their opportunities for the educational advantages necessary for moving up are significantly curtailed. Wilson has given some ground on this point, conceding that "despite the sharply different patterns of occupational mobility exerienced by different segments of the black population, race concerns will continue to be more salient than class concerns for individual blacks."

Most of Wilson's critics, however, believe not only that race is one factor affecting the black condition but that, as Kenneth Clark has said, it is "the dominant factor in determining blacks' chances in life." Willie asserts that the significance of race is actually increasing, especially for middle-class blacks who, because of school desegregation, affirmative action, and other programs, are coming into more direct contact with whites for longer periods of time. He cites as an example "the response of white professionals to admissions policies by colleges and universities that are designed to reserve spaces for members of previously excluded racial population." Clark dismisses as "tokenism" the economic and political gains cited by Wilson and warns against "wishful and premature optimism." He has characterized the opposition to quotas manifest in amicus briefs filed in the *Bakke* and *Weber* cases as "contemporary racism" which "masquerades" as non-racism, and he holds "so-called liberal, Northern intellectuals" more responsible for maintaining the racial status quo than Southern racists in their time. At the University of Pennsylvania symposium on Wilson's book, Clark said heatedly:

> I must tell you quite candidly, as I read what you write . . . I do think of . . Wattenberg, of the Pat Moynihans, of that group that I, in my counter-racist way, describe as "white neo-conservative liberals." Sometimes when I try to mask my racism, I call them the "Charles River Crew" using and exaggerating alleged racial progress (among what I still believe to be a very small proportion of blacks who have made it) to affect social policy. . . . Bill, what I'd like to see happen is for you to make it very, very clear that you are not to be associated with that "Charles River Crew" of sophisticated racists. . . .

Wilson has struck out at this. Systematically playing down black achievement is insulting to many blacks, he contends, and demoralizing to both black and white advocates of racial justice. Although the upward movement of many blacks

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at a time of economic downturn has created frictions with whites which have sometimes spilled over into racial animosities, this is a far cry from an actual increase in racism. Describing opposition to quotas as racism is itself a form of irresponsible racial rhetoric, he says, and beyond this an attack on liberal democracy itself, which has provided major support for the black movement to secure equal rights and opportunities.

THE attack on the new black intellectuals by other blacks goes beyond the insinuation that their work might lend weight to social and political reaction; its roots lie in the growing class conflict that is developing within the black community itself.

The civil-rights revolution was fought in the name of blacks generally, but its greatest benefits fell to the black middle class and those with the greatest potential for entering it. Very little is known about the feelings and attitudes of blacks at the lower end of the social scale; the widespread discussion of "black thought" tends to focus on leaders. There is reason to believe, however, that the new black intellectuals reflect the views and interests of the black grass roots more accurately than do their critics and detractors. It is perhaps no coincidence that Walter Williams grew up in the Richard Allen public-housing project in Philadelphia while Thomas Sowell was raised in segregated schools in Charlotte, North Carolina, and was later a Harlem drop-out.

Wilson has charged that it is in the *interest* of more privileged blacks to keep the focus on racial rather than economic justice. He does not elaborate on this in his book, but as the debate over it has heated up, he has begun to discuss the political and social implications of class divisions in the black community. Thus, he is sharply critical of the role of the black elite and black intelligentsia who, he argues, have been defining issues in such a way as to obscure class differences among blacks while at the same time advocating programs "that have . . . effectively dealt with the concerns of privileged blacks but have not been designed to alleviate the problems of the black poor." Stung by the harshness of the attack on him at the University of Pennsylvania symposium, Wilson burst out at one point, ". . . I must confess that in the face of the growing problems of poor blacks, I get just a little bit impatient when a black social scientist who . . . drives a Mercedes and lives in a $100,000 house can still talk about the community, the uniform black experience. He has more in common with his white colleagues than he has with the ghetto black poor."

According to Wilson, it is symptomatic of the skewed sense of priorities in the black elite that discussion of the Humphrey-Hawkins "full-employment" bill was overshadowed by the enormous attention given by black leaders to the *Bakke* case, which involved medical-school admissions:

> Whereas the Humphrey-Hawkins bill is so designed as to address the problems of the poor, affirmative-action programs are designed to improve the job prospects for the more privileged minorities, in other words, for trained and educated minority group members. Whereas the black poor would gain from a shift in emphasis from race to economic dislocation, more privileged blacks tend to emphasize, and . . . have, for the moment, a vested interest in keeping race as the single most important issue in developing policies to promote black progress.

In similar fashion, Derrick A. Bell has declared that ". . . those who generally handle school-desegregation litigation do not always have the ongoing close community contact with members of the class they represent which is required to insure continuing sensitivity to client interests." In recent years, he points out, black community leaders in Detroit, Boston, Fort Worth, and Atlanta have been highly critical of national civil-rights leadership for relying too heavily on busing rather than on efforts to achieve truly equal educational opportunity. Bell quotes a critique of a Boston desegregation plan filed by almost two dozen black community leaders directly to Federal Judge W. Arthur Garrity, and predictably ignored by Judge Garrity in his eventual decision to enforce massive busing:

> In the name of equity, we . . . seek dramatic improvement in the quality of education available to our children. Any steps to achieve desegregation must be reviewed in the light of the black community's interest in improved pupil performance as the primary characteristic of educational equity. . . . We think it neither necessary nor proper to endure the dislocations of desegregation without reasonable assurances that our children will instructionally profit.

Bell also cites with approval a compromise desegregation plan worked out by the local Atlanta chapter of the NAACP and the Atlanta school board, and later rejected by the national organization (which ousted the branch president).

Sowell is the harshest of the new black critics in his attacks on the civil-rights leadership. "Black leadership has come disproportionately from two highly atypical groups," he wrote in an op-ed piece in the New York *Times*, "descendants of blacks free before the Civil War and West Indian immigrants." This leadership "speaks in the name of a population from which it differs socially and economically." He adds that many black leaders, "out of guilt but also expediency," have taken "a more extreme political position" than that which obtains "among most of the black population." Following the resignation of Andrew Young from his UN post last summer, Sowell wrote in an op-ed piece in the Los Angeles *Herald Examiner* that "his [Young's] problems were not the problems of the poor, and his radical-chic outlook on the world

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today is very different from that of working-class black people."

It is not yet clear where the class and ideological divisions in the black community may be leading. Wilson's ideas, at least, have begun to make inroads into the thinking of a number of people. "There is no question that race has declined significantly as a separate and distinct barrier to black economic progress in the labor market," writes Bernard E. Anderson, the distinguished economist, in the Urban League's *The State of Black America, 1980*. And, again, "What seems obvious . . . is that strategies that move beyond race as a central focus will become increasingly important in formulating effective remedies to the contemporary problems of blacks in the American economy." In education, the temper of the times, demographic patterns, and efforts signaled by Bell, Edmonds, and others may stimulate a shift away from the integrationist "numbers game" in large urban centers.

As for strategies for the future, the new black intellectuals are themselves divided. While Sowell and Williams lean toward freeing market mechanisms from government and union restraints in order to make more jobs available to black youth, Wilson seems to be moving in the direction of a form of socialism—he has called recently for the development of a national planning agency "to suggest the kinds of new strategies that black leaders and liberals, who recognize the shortcomings of a purely racial policy, might pursue in controlling the deleterious effects of basic economic changes on the lives of the poor." Like Bayard Rustin and the late A. Philip Randolph, he has urged, tactically, a coalition with poor whites for "public-policy programs to attack inequality on a broad class front." Wilson has also been critical of Williams (and Sowell) for their position on the minimum wage, writing that "the problem for poor blacks is not simply the availability of or access to menial jobs in low-wage industries, but the availability of jobs that pay decent wages and provide opportunities for advancement. . . ." In this he has associated himself with labor leaders like Albert Shanker and Gus Tyler in their opposition to Williams's ideas on the minimum wage.

Overall, however, and despite their differences, what can be said about the new black intellectuals is that in their individual voices and from their varying perspectives they have cast a harshly illuminating light on the played-out analyses and policies of another era, while not neglecting the task of pointing out alternatives. This in itself, especially at a time when their white colleagues have been forced into mutedness, is a most welcome development.

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In Defense of Progress

Gertrude Himmelfarb

THE idea of Progress—Progress with a capital "P"—has been in disrepute for a long time now. And with good reason, one would think. The experiences of this century hardly dispose us to any complacency about the present, still less about the future. A pessimistic, even apocalyptic view comes more naturally to a generation which has learned, at great pain, that the most impressive scientific discoveries may be put to the most grotesque use; that material prosperity sometimes has an inverse relationship to the "quality of life"; that a generous social policy may create as many problems as it solves; that the economy remains intractable in spite of all the lessons of Keynesianism, post-Keynesianism, and anti-Keynesianism; that even the most benign governments succumb to the dead weight of bureaucracy while the least benign ones are ingenious in devising new and horrendous means of tyranny; that religious passions are exacerbated in a world that is increasingly secular, and national passions in a world that is fatally interdependent; that the most advanced and powerful countries may be held hostage by a handful of primitive terrorists; that our most cherished principles—liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, even peace—have been perverted and degraded in ways our forefathers never dreamed of. At every point we are confronted with shattered promises, blighted hopes, irreconcilable dilemmas, good intentions gone astray, a choice between evils, a world perched on the brink of disaster—all the familiar clichés, which are all too true and which seem to give the lie to the idea of progress.

Yet it is just this idea that we are now invited to contemplate and to embrace. And we are being urged to do so by one of our major social philosophers, a man who has not only shared these dismal experiences with us but taught us how to think about them. William James made much of the distinction between the "once-born" and the "twice-born": the once-born, simple, innocent, "healthy-minded," having faith in a beneficent God and a harmonious universe; the twice-born, self-conscious and self-critical, experiencing life as a "tragic mystery," acutely aware of the potentiality for evil and of the heroic effort required to overcome it. Robert Nisbet is preeminently the twice-born man. He knows all that can be known about the treacherous simplicities of grand ideas. His work has taken him into three distinct disciplines, and from each he has learned the critical lesson: the sociologist's respect for the complexities of society, the historian's for the uniqueness of historical events, the philosopher's for the irreducibility of ideas to easy formulas. Each has made him (and those of us who have learned so much from him) wary of generalizations. Yet it is the largest, most ambitious of all generalizations, a single idea encompassing all of society through all of history, that he now asks us to entertain: "The idea of progress holds that mankind has advanced in the past—from some aboriginal condition of primitiveness, barbarism, or even nullity—is now advancing, and will continue to advance, through the forseeable future."

This may seem to be the worst of all times to propose this idea. But the last time it was seriously proposed was not much more auspicious—from which, perhaps, there is a lesson to be learned about the relation of ideas and events. J. B. Bury's *The Idea of Progress* appeared just two years after the end of World War I, while England was mourning the loss of the best and the brightest of the generation. Perhaps Bury was expressing some intimation of unease when, at the very end of the book, he raised the possibility that just as providence had had its day, discarded by the progress of civilization, so the idea of progress might be rendered obsolete by progress itself. But this supposition, he hastened to add, might prove to be a "trick of dialectic," the implication being that the idea would survive in some other form.

A dozen years later, again by some mischief of fate, Bury's book was published in America, this time at the depth of the Depression and in the shadow of the rise of Nazism. The irony was compounded by the auspices under which the book appeared—a long introduction by Charles Beard, the first sentence of which announced, "The world is largely ruled by ideas, true and false." This dictum was followed by the equally unlikely one (considering the source) that it was only because

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ideas have this power that "constitutional and democratic government" is possible, since only ideas can resolve social conflict without violence. (This from the author of *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution,* which was not especially respectful of the ideas of the Founding Fathers, nor, for that matter, of ideas in general as the moving force of history.)

The American edition of Bury coincided with the publication of another book that was more in keeping with the spirit of the times, Carl Becker's *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers.* Becker had earlier written a largely favorable review of Bury, concluding with a quotation that had ominous implications. "Posterity is for the philosopher," he quoted Diderot, "what the other world is for the religious man." This later emerged as the theme of his own book. In a deceptively casual tone, with a great show of urbanity and good humor (and without ever mentioning Bury), Becker delivered the *coup de grâce* to the idea of progress. The *philosophes* who prided themselves on their modernity and enlightenment, who thought they had discovered the secret of the universe in the happy congruence of nature and reason, who hoped to liberate men from the forces of darkness—religion, superstition, convention, authority—had created a new "age of faith" under the guise of an "age of reason." Theirs was only another version of Augustine's Heavenly City.

Becker's thesis was (and still is, in spite of the criticisms that have been leveled against it) enormously seductive. And not only because it sounds so elegant and sophisticated that any attempt to quarrel with it seems boorish and naive, but also because it is so thoroughly modern in its skepticism and relativism. "Whirl is king," Becker echoed Aristophanes. All is relative. There is no progress, reason, natural law, or indeed any pattern, meaning, or sense in the universe. The only legitimate questions are "What?" and "How?" "If sometimes, in a moment of absentmindedness or idle diversion, we ask the question 'Why?' the answer escapes us. Our supreme object is to measure and master the world rather than to understand it." The only truth we can be confident of is that today's truths will be belied tomorrow. There is no higher wisdom than that of Marcus Aurelius: "The man of forty years, if he have a grain of sense, in view of this sameness, has seen all that has been and shall be."

As Becker does not mention Bury, so Robert Nisbet, in the magisterial work now before us,* does not mention Becker (perhaps because Nisbet's temperament disposes him to be more generous in praise than sharp in criticism). Yet every page of this book constitutes a powerful indictment not only of Becker's ideas but of his manner—cool, skeptical, uncommitted, bemused. This is not to say that Nisbet is returning the argument to where Bury left it. In paying tribute to Bury, Nisbet alludes to his differences with him, but again, so graciously that the gravity of their differences, and therefore the novelty of Nisbet's own work, may be muted. While Nisbet, like Bury, must be counted among the champions of the idea of progress, his progress is so different that it might almost be another idea.

A clue to the difference lies in the title: Nisbet's *History of the Idea of Progress* compared with Bury's *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into Its Origin and Growth.* For Bury, the early manifestations of the idea were significant only for what it was later to become; indeed, he did not find even the germ of the idea until the 16th century. For Nisbet, the idea existed in a complete and mature form in antiquity as well as in the Middle Ages; and so far from seeing the earlier idea as a weak approximation of the later, he interprets the later, Enlightenment idea in terms of the earlier one. Thus where Bury was able to dispose of twenty centuries or so in a brief introductory chapter, Nisbet devotes a considerable portion of his book to that period.

The longest and most provocative section is on Augustine. Whatever reservations one may have about this or that part of Augustine's philosophy in relation to the idea of progress—the stages of history corresponding to the ages of man and concluding with decay and death; or the "universal conflagration" which was to precede universal redemption—one cannot deny the force of Nisbet's argument in general. Moreover, it is Nisbet himself who provides us with most of the ammunition that may be used against him; anticipating the objections, he has himself cited the relevant texts. But it is not Nisbet's exegesis that interests us so much as his thesis— Augustine as the bearer of the "vital, essential elements of the Western idea of progress":

> Mankind or the human race; the unfolding, cumulative advancement of mankind, materially and spiritually through time; a single time frame into which all the civilizations, cultures, and peoples which have ever existed on earth, or now exist, can be compressed; the idea of time as a unilinear flow; the conception of stages and epochs, each reflected by some historic civilization or group of civilizations or a level of cultural development; the conception of social reform rooted in historical awareness; the belief in the necessary character of history and in the inevitability of some future end or objective; the idea of conflict of cities, nations, and classes as the motor spring of the historical process; and finally, the raptured picture of the future, set by Augustine in the psychological, cultural, and economic terms which would remain the essential terms of nearly all utopias in later centuries: affluence, security, equity, freedom, and tranquility. And justice!

* *History of the Idea of Progress,* Basic Books, 370 pp., $16.95.

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This is no pallid progressivism. It is the full-blooded variety we have always associated with the Enlightenment. It may also appear to be a highly secularized interpretation of Augustine. And perhaps it is. But if so, it prepares the way for a more religious view of the Enlightenment itself—and of all philosophies which claim to be truly progressive. Nisbet has turned Becker on his head. If the 18th-century *philosophes* were merely reconstructing Augustine's City of God, and if Augustine himself derived his "raptured picture of the future" from the dialectical relationship between the City of God and the City of Man, then the idea of progress—the modern idea as much as the ancient—must be infused with an authentic spirit of religiosity, a sense of man's worth that is predicated upon a transcendent reality. Becker thought that in attributing a religious quality to the Enlightenment, in establishing its similarity to the Heavenly City, he was "exposing" it, revealing its fatal flaw, its unscientific, unhistorical, unmodern character. What Nisbet has done is to make a virtue out of Becker's vice.

THE scholar fixated upon one or another figure in Nisbet's story may lose sight of the whole, and that would be a great misfortune. On its own, for example, the account of Augustine may seem overly secularized. But if the story is permitted to unfold—"progressively," one might say—the larger configuration corrects whatever distortions may appear in the separate parts. The shadow of Augustine appears again and again, illuminating, by contrast or comparison, a variety of later figures, and in the process fleshing out Augustine himself. It is his ghostly presence that helps explain some of the other revisionist highlights of the book—most notably the reversal of the conventional interpretations of the Renaissance and Reformation.

Recalling Samuel Johnson's paraphrase of the whole of one chapter of *The Natural History of Iceland*—"There are no snakes to be met with throughout the whole of Iceland"—Nisbet pronounces a similar unequivocal judgment on the Renaissance: "Nor are there any ideas of progress to be met with throughout the whole Renaissance." Unlike the author of the history of Iceland, however, he does go on for the length of a chapter to dispose of Machiavelli, Erasmus, More, Bacon, and Descartes. It is with obvious relief that he reaches the Reformation, "The Great Renewal," as he is pleased to call it—a renewal of the idea of progress and with it, not by accident, of religion.

It is at this point that one can begin to appreciate the larger revisionist enterprise in which Nisbet is engaged—the revision not only of the received wisdom about individual thinkers and movements of thought but of the idea of progress itself. His initial definition of progress sounds innocent enough: "Mankind has advanced in the past, . . . is now advancing, and will continue to advance through the foreseeable future." Nor is there anything startling in his description of the two lines of advance: the gradual, cumulative improvement in knowledge; and the realization on earth of man's spiritual, moral, and material aspirations. But as soon as he enters the classical and Christian worlds, the conventional picture begins to vanish and the lineaments of Nisbet's distinctive idea of progress to emerge. Knowledge, we are told, had an important "practical," even "technological," dimension from the beginning; this-worldly concerns were prominent even when the ultimate goal was other-worldly: the spirit of social reform inspired even the attempts to reform the church; and Christian millenarianism, combined with the ancient idea of development, made for a unilinear idea of progress in which past, present, and future were inextricably connected. The Renaissance, in denying its own immediate past, demeaning it as the Dark Ages, broke the chain of progress. Without the commitment to the past there was no warrant for progress in the future; all that remained were cycles of rise and decline. The rejection of tradition, authority, and doctrine led to a subjectivism which could find reality and redemption only in the inner consciousness of man, and to varieties of irrationality manifested in a fascination with the occult, witchcraft, magic, and the Devil. "Fate and fortune" thus replaced "reason and probity" as the forces determining man's lot on earth.

IF THE early history of the idea of progress is much altered by this reading, the later history is no less so. Again, there is a deceptive familiarity in Nisbet's pronouncement that the Enlightenment witnessed the "triumph" of the idea of progress, and that a dominant motif of the idea as it then developed was secularization, the liberation of progress from any reliance upon providence. Even at this point he includes among the leaders of the Enlightenment and the proponents of the idea of progress those who did in fact believe in providence, even those who believed in it in its most orthodox forms. More important is his insistence that even the more secular, scientific creeds were imbued with a religious spirit, an idea of the sacred, that belies the conventional image of rationalism and secularism.

It is a perilous path Nisbet treads in this modern period. He has no difficulty in establishing the idea of progress as the common denominator among a wide variety of thinkers: materialists and idealists, romantics and positivists, evolutionists and revolutionists, reformers and millenarians, individualists and socialists, economists and anthropologists, poets and scientists. The difficulty lies in respecting their differences, differences which vitally affected their ideas of progress, while preserving the identity of the idea itself. He copes with this problem by distinguishing between two major

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groups: those who saw progress as the means for the achievement of freedom, and those who saw it as the means for the attainment of power (not, to be sure, power for its own sake, but power nonetheless). The first includes Turgot, Condorcet, Smith, Malthus, the Founding Fathers, Godwin, Kant, Mill, Spencer; the second, Rousseau, Fichte, Hegel, Saint-Simon, Comte, Marx, Gobineau. Nisbet makes no secret of his preference for the first group and his wariness, in some cases abhorrence, of the second. But in both he finds much to praise as well as to criticize, so that the two categories do not correspond to an honor roll and a blacklist. The typology is useful, allowing for great latitude and subtlety, which in a complicated subject of this sort is all to the good. But in some instances it is so latitudinarian that it obscures differences one might want to emphasize—the difference, for example, between utopianism and progressivism.

As it stands, there are utopians on both sides of the great divide: Condorcet and Godwin on the one side, Saint-Simon, Comte, and Marx on the other. Condorcet and Godwin are assigned to the first group because they looked to progress for the emancipation of individuals *qua* individuals; they remained libertarian to the end—the end of history. Saint-Simon, Comte, and Marx, on the other hand, had as their end the emergence of a community in which individuals would find fulfillment, but only at the sacrifice of their liberty and individuality. One can argue, however, that even in the case of Godwin and Condorcet, the utopian impulse, radically individualistic and anarchic as it may seem, ultimately succumbs to the same failings that bedevil the power-obsessed utopians. And for the very reason that Nisbet is so sensitive to: the break in the continuum of history, not only between past and present but between the all-too-real, all-too-imperfect present and the utopian future, the final state of perfection.

At one point Nisbet cites Leszek Kolakowski on the utopian mentality: "Utopia is a desperate desire to attain absolute perfection; this desire is a degraded remnant of the religious legacy in nonreligious minds." In the service of that ideal end and in defiance of the real desires of real people, the utopian is ready to use the most violent and despotic means. He is all the more ready to do so, Kolakowski says, because he sees nothing in the past or present that is worth salvaging: "There is a radical discontinuity between the world as it is and as it will be; a violent leap is needed to do away with the past; a new time will start." Nisbet agrees with the first part of this critique but not the second. The utopian, he insists, has always been able to combine a philosophy of cumulative progress with a belief in catastrophic violence as a necessary prelude to the golden age. If one accepts Nisbet's view, this would be a damning indictment of the idea of progress. If the idea of progress can coexist so readily with the disposition to violence, the former is evidently no protection against the latter. It is Kolakowski who, by denying to the utopians the idea of progress, by emphasizing the radical discontinuity in their view of history, redeems progress from the violence and despotism that have all too often accompanied utopianism.

One can take this case further by applying it to the libertarian utopians. While Nisbet is well-disposed to Condorcet and Godwin, he does not shy away from the fact that they were genuine utopians. They were not merely liberals who carried their liberalism somewhat further than conventional liberals did. They did not simply look forward to a time when things would be better, even very much better. Their progress was nothing less than progress toward "perfectibility." Anything short of that they regarded as radically imperfect, hence evil. The future they anticipated was one in which all disease would be conquered and decay overcome, the result being an "indefinite," "infinite" prolongation of life tantamount to immortality. The only thing that would keep that world of the future from being intolerably overcrowded by all those immortal beings was the simultaneous and equally infinite progress in rationality, a rationality which would liberate men from all selfish interests and irrational passions, including sexuality. Eventually, Godwin predicted, these totally rational people would "probably cease to propagate": "The whole will be a people of men, and not of children. Generation will not succeed generation, nor truth have, in a certain degree, to recommence her career every thirty years." This triumph of rationality would also bring with it a triumph of liberty. The individual would be liberated from all social, legal, political, domestic, even cultural bonds—from the law ("an institution of the most pernicious tendency"), government, family, any kind of work involving cooperation or division of labor, and any form of cooperative activity (musical concerts, theatrical performances, and the like).

A DOCTRINE of perfectibility which regards interest and passion as irrational and immoral, law and government (not this or that law or government, but law and government in principle) as illegitimate and tryannical, the family as repressive, and even voluntary institutions as intolerable infringements upon the freedom of the individual, has political consequences that are not very different from those attending the "progress-as-power" utopias. It was Tocqueville who taught us that liberty depends on the vitality and multiplicity of institutions which mediate between the individual and the state. And it was Nisbet, I recall, who once proposed, as the crucial test of a social philosophy, its attitude to the family; if there were only one criterion, he said, by which to distinguish between liberal and authoritarian philosophies, it would be the degree to

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which they supported or subverted the family. By that test, "progress-as-freedom" utopias are as noxious as the "progress-as-power" ones. For it is utopianism itself that, finally, militates against freedom. The ideal of a utopia not only belittles any kind of progress that can be achieved short of utopia, making anything short of perfection seem radically evil, but the pursuit of that idea—whether absolute reason, absolute liberty, absolute virtue, or any combination of these—makes it all too easy to justify the use of absolute power.

The only kind of utopia which escapes this fatal perversion is the religious millennium which is avowedly other-worldly. It is not utopianism itself that is dangerous; what is dangerous is a utopianism that locates its ultimate ideal, its dream of perfection, in this world. It is the glory of the religious imagination that it can retain the spark of divinity, the transcendent vision of perfection, without having to realize it on earth. Those who deplore the absence of absolute ideals in the modern world, who find it spiritually debilitating not to have such ideals, are testifying to an important truth about human nature. But in belittling those ideals when they are located in the realm of spirit, in insisting that the ideals are not real unless they infuse and transform the temporal world, they are belying the reality of that spiritual aspect of human nature which they profess to believe in —to say nothing of lending themselves to a grotesque perversion of those ideals by trying to make them a reality in the here-and-now. It is the genius of religion to encompass in the same imagination the idea of progress in this world and the millennium in the other.

THERE IS much else in Nisbet's idea of progress, apart from the religious theme, to distinguish it from the conventional idea. His schema emphasizes the "remembered past" which is not superseded by the present or negated by the future but which continues to inform both the present and the future; the "invariability of human nature" which provides a common denominator for past, present, and future (and which, presumably, precludes any radical transformation of human nature); the slow, gradual, and cumulative quality of progress; the practical as well as theoretical character of knowledge; the material progress that is reflected in improved conditions and prospects for an ever-increasing number of people; and a moral progress concomitant with that material progress.

The idea of material progress brings Adam Smith to the center of this history. Some years ago Joseph Cropsey developed the interesting thesis that Smith advocated capitalism "because it makes freedom possible—not because it *is* freedom." That thesis suggests another: that Smith advocated capitalism—"the natural system of liberty," as he called it—because it makes possible the expansion and distribution of wealth and thus freedom itself. Only a "progressive state," Smith said (by which he meant an expanding economy) could insure the "natural progress of opulence," an opulence which would inevitably affect—not equally, to be sure, but in some measure—all classes of the population.

We are so accustomed to think of classical political economy as a "dismal science" governed by "iron laws" beyond human control, an amoral, asocial, apolitical ideology, that the real Adam Smith may come as a surprise. Nisbet properly restores Smith to the status he had in his own time, as a moral philosopher for whom wealth was a precondition of the well-being of society as well as of the individual. And by society Smith meant all people. "Servants, laborers, and workmen of different kinds make up the far greater part of every great political society," he wrote in the *Wealth of Nations*. "No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable." Moreover, that "far greater part" of society, he insisted, had essentially the same nature, needs, and aspirations as the smaller part, the rich and well-born. Nisbet quotes Smith's assertion of the basic equality of all men: "The difference of natural talents in different men is, in reality, much less than we are aware of," the difference arising "not so much from nature, as from habit, custom, and education." The rest of that passage is even more striking: "By nature a philosopher is not in genius and disposition half so different from a street porter as a mastiff is from a greyhound."

Yet there was a "dismal science," even if Smith had no part of it. Nisbet cites me as one of those who converted him to the view that Malthus was not the father of that dismal science. I hereby recant that revisionist theory. As I now read Malthus, he bears the main responsibility for the transformation of political economy from the expansive, optimistic, melioristic, humane creed of Adam Smith into a profoundly pessimistic doctrine. Nisbet is right to say, as I once did, that the second edition of Malthus's *Essay on Population* was not as fatalistic as the first. The original version of the law of population had posited a discrepancy between population and food supply—population tending to increase geometrically while the food supply increased only arithmetically—which was corrected or kept in balance by a series of "checks" (famine, disease, and various immoral means of preventing procreation), all of which, in one way or another, contributed to "misery and vice." The second edition introduced an additional check on population which did not issue in misery and vice: "moral restraint," a voluntary delay of marriage and hence of procreation. This new check opened the possibility which had been earlier foreclosed, that at some future time there might be some real improvement in the condition of the lower classes.

This is not the place to revise my revisionist in-

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terpretation of Malthus, except to point out that the second edition of the *Essay on Population,* like the first, attacked Smith for supposing that industrialism would benefit the working classes; it equivocated on the degree of improvement which might realistically be expected from moral restraint; and that the thrust of its argument, its dramatic and memorable message, continued to be the inexorability of the law of population and the misery and vice resulting from that law. But even conceding the large change in the text itself, one has to take into account the way contemporaries read it, or, more often (because fewer read it than cited it), the way it penetrated the *Zeitgeist* by osmosis, so to speak. And here there can be little doubt of its effect. There was surely much else in early industrial England to trouble and unsettle contemporaries. But the Malthusian doctrine, which seemed so inexorable and plausible (as irrefutable, someone said at the time, as the addition and multiplication tables), must carry a large responsibility for altering the consciousness and hence the social reality of an entire generation. The benign vision of Smith, in which an "invisible hand" made the self-interest of individuals conducive to the best interests of all, was replaced by the image of a society engaged in a desperate struggle for existence, with each individual pitted against every other, and where even the fortunate survivors in this "lottery of life" were doomed to misery and vice. It was this Hobbesian scene—"solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short"—that haunted England for at least half a century, and made industrialism a terror to the very people who were to be, as Smith had predicted, its main beneficiaries.

If Malthusianism confirms the importance of ideas in history, it confirms even more the importance of the idea of progress. In his introduction Nisbet explains why this particular idea is so important: "The history of all that is greatest in the West—religion, science, reason, freedom, equality, justice, philosophy, the arts, and so on—is grounded deeply in the belief that what one does in one's own time is at once tribute to the greatness and indispensability of the past, and confidence in an ever more golden future." It might be argued, he continues, that all that is required for progress lies in the individual alone, in his will, aspirations, and actions. But that view Nisbet rejects: "The springs of human action, will, and ambition lie for the most part in beliefs about universe, world, society, and man which defy rational expectations"—in "dogmas," in short. The idea of progress is such a dogma. It is this dogma, Nisbet claims, which has permitted the West to attain the heights it has, and it is the waning of this dogma that is one of the most ominous facts of the present and a tragic portent of the future.

At this point one has to confront what may seem an anomaly in this work, one which Nisbet, perhaps out of modesty, does not allude to. And that is its place in his own intellectual history. It is surely worthy of note that this great tribute to the idea of progress should have been written by the author of such other memorable books as *The Quest for Community, Community and Power, The Social Bond, Tradition and Revolt, The Degradation of the Academic Dogma, Twilight of Authority.* The last two titles hardly signify an overweening faith in progress, and the others suggest a mode of thought that is not usually associated with that idea. Nor are the heroes of those books the heroes of this. Tocqueville and Weber appear here as critics of the idea of progress—anti-heroes, so to speak. Durkheim, the subject of another of Nisbet's books, makes only one fleeting appearance, and Simmel and Tönnies are not present at all; if they were, it could only have been as witnesses for the prosecution. And so too with Nisbet's lesser heroes—Burke, Lamennais, Burckhardt, LePlay—who are either conspicuously absent here or in the opposition.

Nor is there much room for the concepts which figured so prominently in his other influential work, *The Sociological Tradition*: community, authority, status, the sacred, alienation. By an effort of imagination they might be made consonant with the idea of progress; they are, after all, part of the past which Nisbet insists upon as an essential aspect of progress. Yet there is clearly a tension between them and the idea of progress. Indeed, in that constellation, progress itself appeared as the "antithesis" of alienation. Other ideas antithetical to the sociological tradition celebrated in that book include liberty, individuality, reason, nature; these, the typical products of the Enlightenment, promised the "release of the individual from ancient social ties and of the mind from fettering traditions." But Nisbet himself, and the thinkers with whom he then identified himself, took a benign view of those "social ties" and "fettering traditions," for the sake of the individual as well as society.

More than *The Sociological Tradition* the book that invites comparison with the present one is *Social Change and History.* Here Nisbet traced the idea of change in the various forms it assumed over the ages—growth, development, evolution, progress. In the foreword to the present volume, Nisbet speaks of going over some of the same "intellectual ground" he had covered in the earlier book, although with a "different objective." That qualification hardly prepares us for the extent of the difference, a difference that is all the more striking in view of the similarities in the accounts of some individual thinkers (Augustine, for example). A significant token of the difference is the use of the word "metaphor" in the earlier book to describe the idea of development or progress. The metaphor was useful, Nisbet said, in characterizing a "totality" that was an intellectual construct

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rather than an empirical fact—a totality of knowledge, or culture, or civilization. But if the metaphor had its uses, it had still more abuses, and it was these that most occupied him.

Dedicated to his teacher, Frederick Teggart ("whose book it is"), *Social Change and History* reflected Teggart's own suspicion of any overriding idea—the idea of progress was the most egregious example—which tried to impose an artificial unity upon either history or society, thus violating the particularity of historical events and the multiplicity and complexity of social institutions. Expanding upon this view, Nisbet suggested that the true premises of social behavior were the "very opposite" of those posited by developmental theories. "Fixity," not change, was the natural, normal condition; and the "event," rather than any law, generalization, or theory, was the crucial concept in the understanding of change, the event itself being resistant to generalization since it was, as often as not, external, adventitious, intrusive, intermittent, mutational. Whatever "linear directionality" might be found in history was in the "beholder's eye, not in the materials themselves." The quest for such a "unified theory of change" had been going on for twenty-five hundred years and was "as vain as the quest for perpetual youth or for the means of transmuting base metals into gold."

History of the Idea of Progress (perhaps so titled to distinguish it as much from Teggart's *The Idea of Progress* as from Bury's book) would seem to be doing exactly what *Social Change and History* had decried: seeking a "unified theory of change"—and finding it, moreover, in the twenty-five-hundred-year history of the idea of progress. Yet in an important sense the two books are complementary rather than contradictory. In *Social Change and History,* Nisbet was addressing himself to history and society, the attempt to understand historical events and social facts, and for that purpose the idea of progress was obfuscatory and misleading; it substituted metaphor for explanation, saw some kind of determinism or necessity at work where there was more often chance and contingency, and made light of concrete events and circumstances. But even in that book, Nisbet had allowed for the use of the metaphor to illuminate patterns on the largest scale, so long as it was confined to that level of generality—to "metahistory," one might say, as distinct from history. "It is as inevitable in modern Western consciousness (perhaps in all human consciousness) to ask the question, 'Whither Civilization?' . . . as it is to ask the question, 'What is the meaning of life?' Not the most resolutely empirical or pragmatic mind, surely, can resist the occasional allure of such questions."

If Nisbet has now succumbed to the allure of those large questions, he has done so without falling into the fallacies he had earlier cautioned against. His new book is a pure, classical exercise in metahistory. At no point is the idea of progress used to explain any particular historical event or even any complex or sequence of events. Nor does it pretend to be empirically demonstrable or verifiable. It is exactly as he had earlier described it: an idea, a dogma. It is not, however, a metaphor. And here lies the great difference between the books. They are entirely consistent—and entirely different in intent and "affect." In the earlier book, the idea of progress was something to be wary of, to use, if at all, with great circumspection, to keep at a safe distance, as history itself had to be distanced from it—hence, "metaphor," a literary term to emphasize its divorce from reality (and also, perhaps, to belittle and trivialize it). In the present book, the idea has been restored to its status as an idea and invested with the power of a dogma —a dogma essential to the well-being of society.

However metahistorical the idea may be, it now comes to us with all the urgency of a specific, highly charged, indeed explosive historical situation. Nisbet has not succumbed to the allure of metahistory. History itself has done so, has called metahistory on to the stage of history. A decade or so ago when *Social Change and History* was published, the clear and present danger was the prevailing contempt for the specific and the concrete —for particular events which could properly be explained only in particularistic terms, for social problems which could be alleviated only by small, pragmatic, incremental reforms. Today the danger is a lack of faith so monumental that it can be met only by invoking an idea on the same grand scale. It is precisely the "totality" of history, society, culture, civilization, that is at stake. And it is at stake, Nisbet believes, because the idea that once gave meaning to it—and with meaning, a sense of dignity, confidence, pride, power—has been fatally undermined.

Toward the end of the book, Nisbet quotes Friedrich Hayek: "Progress is movement for movement's sake, for it is in the process of learning, and in the effects of having learned something new, that man enjoys the gifts of his intelligence." One hears the echo of Mill's theory of liberty for its own sake and individuality for its own sake. Nisbet does not explicitly take issue with Hayek, but his own idea of progress is more substantive and concrete. For him "movement" is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the idea of progress. Indeed, he posits five "crucial premises" of the idea: "belief in the value of the past; conviction of the nobility, even superiority, of Western civilization; acceptance of the worth of economic and technological growth; faith in reason and in the kind of scientific and scholarly knowledge that can come from reason alone; and, finally, belief in the intrinsic importance, the ineffaceable *worth* of life on this earth." It is because each of these premises is now being widely denied—not, as in the past, by a few historians, philosophers, and

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artists, but by a large and extremely influential body of opinion—that the situation has become so critical. "Progress at Bay" is the title of the penultimate chapter. But it could as well have been "Western Civilization at Bay."

IT IS not so much that Nisbet has changed his views as that history has given them an ironic twist. In *The Sociological Tradition* he explained how the ideals of the Enlightenment had become perverted, democracy issuing in a "tyranny imposed by the mass," liberty in a "morbid isolation" of the individual, reason in a "rationalization of spirit," secularism in "sterile disenchantment." It was this perversion which Burke, Tocqueville, Burckhardt, Weber, Durkheim, and the others in the great tradition were responding to and which made them impatient with any theory of progress.

> What we see, beginning with the conservatives in their general distrust of modernism, is the tragic view of life set in time perspective. It is a view that draws its melancholy forecast of the future, not from extraneous or fortuitous factors, but from the very substance of history, from the very forces that the rationalists had hailed as promising liberation and the new empire of reason. In this view history is conceived as being periodically seized by deep moral crises which do not—as the thinkers of inexorable progress argued—automatically resolve themselves but remain instead to haunt and mock man's hopes of secular salvation.

We are now witnessing one of those "deep moral crises" that has periodically assailed us, only this time so deep that it may signal the end of Western civilization. (As a small symptom of this, Nisbet cites the reversal of the roles of the Western and non-Western worlds. Where once it was assumed that the West would serve as a model for the developing nations, ours being the condition toward which they were developing, we are being increasingly confronted with the claim that the Third World, with its peculiar, and peculiarly despotic, varieties of socialism, is the model for the future.) It is in this situation of "disbelief, doubt, disillusionment, and despair" (one can go on with those negatives—a distrust of ourselves, a discontent with what we have achieved, a disrespect for our principles and institutions, a debasement of our culture . . .) that Nisbet calls for a return to the idea of progress, perhaps not so much to signify our faith in the future as to reaffirm our faith in ourselves—which is to say, in our own past and present. Only by reestablishing that continuity can we prevent ourselves from being engulfed by a new "wave of the future" that is not our future at all.

There is scarcely anyone else who could make so powerful a case for the idea of progress. If Nisbet now commends that idea to us, it is from the vantage point of one who knows everything that can be said against it. It is as a "twice-born," temperamentally and philosophically committed to a tragic view of life, that he is proposing to rehabilitate an idea which we had consigned, perhaps too glibly, to the dust bin of history. He does not pretend to be sanguine about our prospects. History itself, he reminds us, provides us with few examples of cultures as debilitated as ours which were not destroyed by the very forces they set in motion. The only optimistic sign he can point to is the "faint, possibly illusory," beginnings of a religious revival. There is, however, another heartening sign. This book, and the favorable reception it has had, may itself be symptomatic of a new sensibility, one which is post-Enlightenment, post-modernist—but not post-Western.

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The Curious History of Waldemar Haffkine

Edythe Lutzker and Carol Jochnowitz

Had he lived to be a hundred and twenty, Waldemar Haffkine would have died this year. He was born in 1860, into the generation of men who found the means to prevent or cure rabies, typhoid, malaria, yellow fever, and syphilis. Taken together, those diseases may or may not have killed as many people as the two for which Haffkine found the preventive vaccines: cholera and the bubonic plague. During his lifetime, Queen Victoria made him a Companion of the Indian Empire, Lord Joseph Lister saluted him as a "Savior of Humanity," and the Chief Rabbi of England, Joseph Hertz, used excerpts from his writings in the Additional Notes he made to the Second Edition of the Soncino Chumash, describing him as a "a famous scientist." The vast majority of educated Americans alive today have never heard his name.

Haffkine was born Vladimir Aronovich Mordecai Wolf Chavkin in Odessa on March 3, 1860, to a Jewish family of limited means. He received his earliest education at home from his maternal grandfather, who taught at a Jewish school in Odessa, and at the age of twelve proceeded to the gymnasium in nearby Berdiansk. He performed outstandingly there, and in 1879 was admitted to the University of Odessa.

Haffkine's undergraduate career was a melange of intellectual endeavor and revolutionary activity. At the gymnasium he had been powerfully attracted by the underground literature of the socialist-revolutionary movement, then in its heyday, and he now found his natural home among the radical students who were struggling against the Czarist government's ever-increasing restrictions on academic freedom. During his years at the university he was arrested three times, suspended once, and finally expelled when he signed a petition protesting the forced resignation of his teacher and mentor, Elie Metchnikoff. Nevertheless, he was permitted, after a protracted bureaucratic wrangle, to collect his degree of Doctor of Science in 1884.

The next few years were frustrating. Unable to get a university position because of his refusal to convert to the Russian Orthodox Church, Haffkine had to settle for a desk job at the Odessa Museum of Natural History. It offered little in the way of intellectual stimulation, and in 1888 he left to work with Moritz Schiff in Geneva. Then in 1889 Metchnikoff, who had left Russia to work at the Pasteur Institute, wrote to ask if Haffkine would like to join him there. Haffkine jumped at the chance, and in 1891 began his research on an anti-cholera vaccine. His quest took a little over a year, climaxing with an auto-inoculation in June of 1892 that was the vaccine's first use on a human subject. The last and worst of the five great cholera pandemics of the 19th century was then ravaging Asia and Europe, and early in 1893 Haffkine got the permission of the British to go to India and combat the disease at its source, the joint deltas of the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers.

He said later that in his darkest expectations he had had no idea of the difficulties he would have to face. He had gone to Bengal to subject his vaccine to a controlled experiment in the form of field trials held amid epidemic conditions. But the British ruled that all participation in these trials must be voluntary, so that any such thing as the selection of a proper mix of subjects and controls was out of his hands. Moreover, Haffkine soon discovered he had no real idea of the geographical unpredictability of cholera. He had originally planned to select some historically vulnerable village, inoculate half the population, and wait for the next epidemic to wash over it. This proved to be based on a fantasy: in any given village the next epidemic might not come for years. The year in which Haffkine arrived in India was, as a matter of fact, one of the freest of cholera in the memory of anyone then living. His first expedition, a ten-month trip along the axis of the hills that lead northwest to the Punjab, encountered no epidemic cholera at all, although he managed to inoculate upward of 20,000 people. The one difficulty he had not had was in finding volunteers.

Haffkine's first opportunity to operate in something other than a scientific vacuum came in March 1894, when cholera broke out in Calcutta around two infected water tanks. His first trial involved a population of 200, of whom 116 were inoculated; all 116 escaped infection while there were 9 cases, several fatal, among the 84 controls. His vaccine continued to acquit itself well, though not always so dramatically, throughout the epidemic which peaked over Calcutta during the next two years. Haffkine's vaccine did not guarantee absolute immunity against cholera as do, say, Salk's polio vaccine or the vaccination against smallpox. But it did provide a sensible margin of protection for the inoculated, among whom morbidity and mortality proved to be approximately one-tenth of what they were in the unprotected population.

Haffkine worked throughout the northeastern quadrant of India for the next two years, eventually es-

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tablishing a number of inoculation centers. Still, there were setbacks. In one mill town, Serampore, the advent of Haffkine and his assistants caused an outbreak of mass panic in which educated natives and Europeans inexplicably joined, forcing the inoculation team to flee for their lives. English anti-vaccinationists occasionally wrote letters to newspapers announcing that the Indian government was injecting into the veins of its fighting men "the excreta of men of no caste"; these letters sent tremors of alarm through a military command which remembered the lessons of the Sepoy Mutiny. And Haffkine found it almost impossible to establish operations in one area where he should logically have been welcomed with open arms: the tea gardens of Assam, traditionally one of the worst breeding-grounds of the disease. The anti-cholera vaccination caused a reaction which made physical labor impossible for a day or two; the growers were reluctant to lose a day's work and the coolies equally so to lose a day's pay.

Then there was the question of money. The original arrangement that Haffkine had made with the British was that they would allow him to go to India since he seemed to want to. No mention was made of paying him for what he would be doing there. After he had been working for a few months, one official remarked that an allowance to help him meet his living expenses (it was never called a salary) might be appropriate, and he was voted one of fifteen rupees a day. This allowance expired on December 31, 1893, and was not renewed —the idea simply seems not to have occurred to anyone. In June 1894, Haffkine finally submitted a request for money to meet his expenses, which he had been paying out of his own pocket for six months, and, in September, the finance department of the government of India sent him a fascinating reply. The department informed Haffkine that it had decided to "continue" his allowance for "twelve months, from January 1, 1894, to December 31, 1894." The fact that most of 1894 was in fact already over was not alluded to. This curious pattern was to be repeated the following year, after which the authorities simply dropped the matter—that is, they stopped paying Haffkine anything at all.

For whatever reasons, Haffkine never taxed the authorities about this; he was more concerned that they would allow his work to go to waste by failing to erect the institutional apparatus necessary to perpetuate it. To this end, he constantly besought them to set up laboratories, inoculation centers, training programs for operators; he also urged them to publish the statistics from his work and give their official imprimatur to vaccination programs for civil servants. And eventually, though never without a certain amount of poking and prodding, the authorities agreed to much of this. Haffkine's mission was not an easy one; he had to track a capricious disease through a country of strangers in one of the most punishing climates on earth; he had to train and keep a staff which, unlike him, was not at all agreeable to the idea of working for nothing. Even so, he did not feel himself to be the object of a systematic program of frustration of the kind that would be put into effect during the second part of his Indian campaign. This began in the autumn of 1896, when Haffkine was sent to Bombay upon the outbreak of bubonic plague.

Haffkine arrived in Bombay on October 7 and began to work on an anti-plague vaccine the following day. He succeeded in developing one by January 1897, once again testing it on himself before allowing its use on any other human being, as he had done with his cholera vaccine. An opportunity for a field trial under perfectly controlled conditions occurred almost at once when plague broke out at the Byculla Men's House of Correction. As in Calcutta, the first results were dramatic: the 183 uninoculated prisoners had 12 cases of plague with 6 deaths, while there were only 2 cases, both ending in recovery, among the 154 inoculated. By the end of the year, almost 8,000 citizens of Bombay had volunteered for inoculation, and Haffkine had begun the expeditions to nearby plague-striken areas —Lanowlie, Poona, Damaun—that along with the running of his laboratory were to occupy him for the next six years.

Now it would be quite untrue to say that the British in Bombay did not take Haffkine's work seriously. They welcomed him; they gave him space for a laboratory; they supplied him with men and materials (within certain limits, as will be seen); they even paid him a salary (and called it that). The problems that eventually developed probably originated in the way the British regarded their priorities in dealing with the plague. It must be remembered that the science of immunology was still in its infancy in 1896. The idea on which it was based—the germ theory of disease—was only twenty years old when Haffkine sailed for India. The field trials he performed in Calcutta and Assam were among the first examples in human history of the use of mass inoculations to halt the progress of an epidemic. Haffkine was, in short, a new thing in the world. In northeastern India, where cholera had been endemic for generations, a condition against which no remedy had ever been thought of, the authorities were amenable to the idea of having someone come in and perform experiments within certain limits. But the plague that sailed into Bombay out of the blue in August 1896 was not a condition to be lived with but rather a crisis to be met, and it engendered what might be called a crisis mentality in the authorities who bore the responsibility for dealing with it.

The British medical authorities in Bombay, who had had no training in the fledgling science of bacteriology, relied exclusively on the then universally accepted sanitarian approach to the epidemic. They limewashed the insides and outsides of houses where plague had struck, disinfecting or destroying household effects they believed might prove sources of further infections, and they ordered all plague victims into hospitals and their families into "contact camps," set up for the purpose of isolating possible carriers.

The British were willing to accept Haffkine's enterprise as one prong in this campaign, but they

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treated him like a stepchild. Haffkine soon found that in addition to his field work he bore sole responsibility for keeping the government reminded that in order to continue producing vaccine his laboratory had to be kept supplied with equipment and manpower. The interoffice records of the Indian Military Medical Service from 1896 to 1902 show a continual stream of requests from Haffkine's office, sometimes frantic, for technical and administrative facilities. These were met with an attitude ranging from simple absentmindedness to what could only have been deliberate obstructionism. He needed men, always more men; none could be spared. He needed someone to conduct follow-up investigations of his results; it took months. He asked that in order to verify his results on a mass scale, a question on inoculations be added to the census form; the idea was rejected as useless. Overwhelmed by the press of work, he asked that a bookkeeper be added to his staff; an official commented: "It is difficult to see why a gentleman of Mr. Haffkine's acumen and nationality should be unable to supervise accounts of a somewhat petty nature."

And he suggested that, since his preparation had been shown to reduce plague mortality by as much as 80 or 90 per cent, those persons who volunteered for the vaccine should be excused from the otherwise compulsory measures of segregation into hospitals and contact camps. The British rejected the idea out of hand at first, bitterly resenting Haffkine's intrusion into the field of public-health administration, which they considered their own preserve. Eventually, however, they did accept his proposal as *de facto* policy. They were well aware that the natives of India were absolutely terrified of the European hospitals—much more so, in fact, than they were of the plague. Hindus feared contact with co-religionists of other castes, Muslims feared being forced to eat forbidden meats, and not a few of both religions believed that the hospitals had been established for the purpose of supplying Queen Victoria with human livers. Haffkine was appalled by the distress and upheaval caused in the natives' lives by the policies of segregation and disinfection, and by the money and energy the British continued to pour into them even when it had become apparent that they had little or no effect on controlling the spread of plague. Several times he tried to point out that since the plague bacillus, unlike the cholera microbe, could not survive outside the body of a host, attempts to annihilate it on floors and walls were in fact wide of the mark. (At the time, neither Haffkine nor the British knew the actual mode of transmission of the plague, which is through the agency of a vector flea that carries the microbe back and forth among the animals and humans it bites. They did know that rats were the first carriers of the disease in any epidemic, but the authorities had accepted early on that any attempt to control the rodent population of Bombay and environs was hopeless.)

THE conclusion seems inescapable that the Indian Military Medical Service felt less and less hospitable to Haffkine as time went on. Neither as doctors nor as military officers were the British inclined to welcome the suggestions of an outsider who represented such a challenge to the established way of doing things—and Haffkine, the Russian Jew, was no ordinary outsider. In August 1899, they took their first overt step toward edging him out of the way. Haffkine's laboratory, which had been moved from site to site as the demands on its productivity grew ever greater, was in that month installed in what was finally to be its permanent home—the Government House at Parel, henceforward known as the Plague Research Laboratory. The ceremony marking its opening was a gala affair, attended by the governor of Bombay and any number of military and medical notables. Only Haffkine was missing—he was in England on furlough. The festivities had been planned so as to occur during his absence. His place on the ceremonial roster was taken by William Burney Bannerman, his second-in-command and a surgeon-general in the Indian military service.

Haffkine returned to India to find other things incubating in his laboratory besides *Pestis yersinis*. As he wrote to the secretary of the government of India in 1900:

> In a scientific establishment, the director is likely to be also the most knowledgeable teacher at the time; and a sincere and unreserved readiness on his part to teach must be secured. This object is frustrated if the teacher is held under the prospect of being superseded or circumvented by those whom he teaches. Want of security on this point will render the best man irate and distrustful. . . . Government and the public are right in reckoning upon the head of a laboratory exhibiting a readiness for self-abnegation and upon his wishes and aims being far above his own interests. . . . But . . . to enable a servant to really forget his interests, it is unavoidable that the government and the public shall think of those themselves. . . . The disposition of a man to teach is maintained by his being surrounded with pupils grateful, not with watchful rivals, looking for the first opportunity of ousting him from his office.

Then, on October 30, 1902, during a mass outdoor inoculation in the Punjabi village of Malkowal, an Indian assistant dropped a forceps he was using to remove the stoppers from the vaccine bottles. Instead of following Haffkine's instructions for such an eventuality and sterilizing it in the flame of a spirit lamp, he swished it briefly in carbolic acid, according to the less stringent dictates of the Punjab Plague Manual, and then opened the bottle with it. Nineteen people inoculated from that bottle subsequently died of tetanus, and the heavens were brought down on Haffkine's head. A commission set up to investigate the tragedy declared that the bottle had been contaminated in the Plague Research Laboratory, and in 1904 Haffkine was relieved of the title and salary of director-in-chief.

He had been railroaded, of course. Nothing untoward happened to any of the people inoculated from any other of the hundreds of bottles prepared in the same batch for use that day, and the physician performing the inoculations later deposed that the contents of the bottle in question were

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absolutely odorless when he opened it. (Sniffing each bottle as it was opened was standard operating procedure in the field, precisely because of the danger of such an occurrence. A bottle that had been incubating a tetanus culture since it left Bombay would have stunk to high heaven by the time it reached the Punjab.)

Haffkine spent the next few years in Europe, taking his case to the scientific community. The matter became something of a *cause célèbre*, climaxing on July 29, 1907, when a letter signed by ten internationally renowned microbiologists, including Nobel Laureate Sir Ronald Ross, appeared in the London *Times*, stating that the accusation against Haffkine was "not only not proven but distinctly disproven." With this imprimatur Haffkine was finally allowed to return to his work in India, though with shaming curtailments to his salary and prestige. He never got over his bitterness at this betrayal, which he very likely saw as the climax to years of professional frustration and petty humiliations. Nevertheless he resumed his duties, serving until 1915, when he reached the mandatory age of fifty-five for pensionable retirement.

HAFFKINE devoted most of the remaining fifteen years of his life to the furtherance of Jewish causes. This concern, which he only now had the leisure to implement fully, had in fact been a constant throughout his life. During his years at the University of Odessa he had been known as one of the tiny minority of Jewish students who were openly proud of their identity rather than regarding it as something to be concealed before entrance into the world of high culture could be attempted. This open acknowledgment of his Jewish identity, rare enough among the non-political students of the time, must have been almost unheard of in the radical circles where Haffkine found his closest friends. He was, after all, a member of the Narodnaya Volya—and one of the two student founders of the Jewish self-defense movement that arose to meet the Odessa pogrom of 1881. Later, at the Pasteur Institute, when he was working twelve and fourteen hours a day on his anticholera vaccine, he also played a leading role in organizational efforts to raise money for Jews attempting to flee Russia. In 1895 he wrote to an English publisher who had requested biographical material: "It would give me great pleasure if, instead of making people believe that I am a Russian or a Pole, you would say that I am a Jew, an Israelite, or Hebrew, whichever you prefer."

Now, in 1915, Haffkine began his retirement with a journey eastward across the United States, during which he sought (among other things) to find out as much as possible about the conditions of American Jewish life. He visited the major cities and the Jewish agricultural communities in California and New Jersey; he met Horace Kallen and Felix Frankfurter. He ate in kosher restaurants, shopped in Jewish department stores, and struck up conversations with peddlers in Jewish neighborhoods. In New York, a performance of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* at Kessler's Roof Garden on Second Avenue moved him to tears.

It was during this trip that Haffkine wrote an article for the *Menorah Journal* entitled "A Plea for Orthodoxy." Haffkine was a fervent believer in God; elsewhere he had said that monotheism was the only philosophical framework in which scientific investigation was possible, since it was the only one that posited a completely transcendent God and therefore left nature intelligible on its own terms. Polytheism he identified with animism, and claimed that it rendered natural phenomena essentially unknowable. Nevertheless, his grounds for urging the forms of Orthodox practice were not that they were divinely commanded but rather that they alone were capable of preserving the Jews as a recognizable and self-conscious people in the world. Haffkine was what might be called a nationalist of the Diaspora. His ultimate vision was one of Jewish communities scattered among the nations of the world, each cohering through its continuing celebration of the Law and all acknowledging the common bond of their religious inheritance. The dangers of persecution were secondary in his mind to those of assimilation and indifferent ignorance. And, although he contributed to the purchase of Jewish land in Palestine as readily as he did to any Jewish cause, a return to Zion on a political basis played no part in his thinking at all. For one thing, it was irrelevant to his concept of Jewish survival; he pointed out on a number of occasions that the Jews had been forced to give up their homeland once, but had taken their religion with them; this had preserved them as a people while their despoilers had gone down to oblivion. For another, he was dubious about the political feasibility of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. Once the British got their Mandate there, he was extremely skeptical as to whether they could ever be persuaded to give it up.

IT WAS to the survival of Jewish culture in the world at large, then, that Haffkine turned his thoughts. In 1919 he drafted a petition for the civil and religious rights of the Jews of Eastern Europe which was presented at the Versailles Conference by a group of notables. In Paris, where he eventually settled, he served on the boards of trustees of both YIVO and the Alliance Israélite. And in 1929 he created the Haffkine Foundation out of his life savings for the funding of the yeshivahs of Eastern Europe, stipulating that their curricula be expanded to include science and trades "so that [their students] not be reduced to misery and begging."

Haffkine died in Switzerland the following year, 1930, mercifully spared the sight of his beneficiaries' ultimate fate. His name, the inexplicable victim of some historiographic memory-hole at least as far as the West is concerned, is borne today by the Haffkine Institute in Bombay (as his laboratory was renamed in 1925); by a Memorial Grove in the Kennedy Forest in Jerusalem; by a laboratory flask he designed for the growth of plague cultures; and by a strain of white mice he bred for experimental work. His posterity lies with those whose parents would not have been born to conceive them but for him; their number is as the sands of the sea.

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Screen Memories from Germany

Richard Grenier

After some four decades in which Germany was almost totally absent from the world cinema as a seminal force—decades during which waves of Italian, French, Swedish, and even Japanese films beat upon American shores—there has been a surprising turnabout. At the recent Los Angeles International Film Exposition (FILMEX), the largest and most comprehensive film festival in North America, huge lines formed outside the Plitt Theater in Century City for almost all new German films—unreviewed, unheralded, many of them made by directors no one had even heard of. The word "German" was enough to draw the crowd.

One Saturday night, for *Der Mädchenkrieg* ("The Girls' War"), which the FILMEX catalogue informed members "used the genre of the 'woman's picture' of the 1940's" to tell the story of World War II, adding that "one could almost be settling comfortably into a movie with Bette Davis and Olivia de Havilland," attendance was mediocre. Which is to say that the 1,400-seat theater was merely full. But on another Saturday night, for *Deutschland, bleiche Mutter* ("Germany, Pale Mother"), when audiences were promised the "cancerous spreading of Nazi fervor," a "searing condemnation," a story "symbolizing the fallen country itself," fever was in the air, scalpers were reselling tickets outside, an excited throng filled the theater to bursting. Similarly, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's *Our Hitler, A Film From Germany*—in which Hitler is described somewhat bizarrely as "the greatest film-maker of all time" and which contains a powerful, even exuberant strain of Nazi mysticism—is now proceeding through the land, thanks to the sponsorship of Francis Ford Coppola, on the loftiest and most exclusive release pattern of any movie in U.S. history ($24 top at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in New York followed by a mere $12 at Hunter College and the Beacon Theater).

The forty-year hiatus in German films deemed worthy of interest abroad is a remarkable event in itself. Germany, after all, along with the United States, Russia, and France, was one of the countries whose national artistic genius most powerfully contributed to the creation of the new art. The conventional explanation lays responsibility for the hiatus at the door of Hitler, who cut the thread, extinguished liberty, drove most of the great German talents abroad. Still, Hitler was in power for only twelve years. What of the quarter-century which followed the Nazi collapse in 1945? Should not new talent have sprung up? World War II hardly caused the Japanese cinema to pause for breath. In fact, Japan produced an impressive number of distinguished films even under Tojo and the Thought Police. Following World War II, starting almost from scratch, important new film-makers emerged in Brazil, and even in India. Most interesting of all, directors in the Soviet satellites of Eastern Europe, forced to deal with an imposed totalitarian system and censorship as formidable as those of Nazi Germany itself—but taking advantage of the zigs and zags of Soviet policy, the sometimes greater, sometimes lesser, desire of the USSR to win the good will of its subject peoples—were tireless in their attempts to make movies of high artistic quality. At one time or another, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia all produced films admired the world over. But still from Germany only the barest trickle. My own feeling is that if Hitler is to be held responsible for this, it is not simply for Nazi film censorship, the "cutting of the thread," but rather for the profound cultural and emotional shock that everything the Nazis did produced in the German nation.

In any event, it is a verifiable fact that of all the great Western countries, West Germany has generated the most fervent demand for cheap, often saccharine, "escapist" entertainment in the cinema. During the first two or three years after the war, there were German films about the Nazi years, as there were books and articles in the popular press, satisfying the curiosity of Germans about what their great war chiefs had been up to in private, what they had "really" been like. But once this curiosity was satisfied, the Germans had had enough. They had no desire to hear about the millions dead, the wanton destruction and inhuman persecution, the horror, shame, guilt, responsibility. They wanted entertainment. And it wasn't simply that they wanted no more pictures about the Nazi past. I feel, myself, that German repression of the Nazi past produced a marked distaste for reality and truthfulness to life, regardless of where the story was located or whether it took place in past, present, or future.

The only vaguely comparable case I know of was the American cinema of the Depression—when, in fact, the word "escapist" was coined—and this was entirely without any feeling of national guilt, the world being simply too frightful to be portrayed realistically, at least in mass entertainment. (I am not an admirer of the American cinema of the Depression years.) So Germany has had its own *Heimatfilme*—native films—all this time, destined for home consumption and escapist to the bone. And now that the German generation with a living memory of the Nazis and

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their works is passing away (at least passing out of the movie houses), we have a new German cinema, a so-called *Neue Welle* (New Wave), created in angry reaction to all those years of vapid escapism.

It is not widely recognized in the United States that most of these new German movies that have been arriving in America, and the *Neue Welle* as a whole—as represented, for example, in the work of Werner Herzog (*Aguirre, the Wrath of God*), Wim Wenders (*The American Friend*), Alexander Kluge (*Yesterday Girl*), and Rainer Werner Fassbinder—are what we would call underground films. Commercially speaking, the old escapist cinema still holds sway in Germany. Thus the view Americans are getting of German movies is roughly comparable to that of a European film buff who knows such American directors as Paul Morissey (*Flesh, Heat, Trash*) Claudia Weill (chronicler of Shirley MacLaine's trip to China and director of *Girl Friends*), and perhaps Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda (*Easy Rider*), but who has not only never seen any films with Clint Eastwood, Burt Reynolds, Robert Redford, or Al Pacino, but has never even heard of them.

NOT typical of the movement in many ways is Volker Schlöndorff, whose latest film, *The Tin Drum*, an adaptation of the celebrated Günter Grass novel, has been a great success on the international market (winning this year's Academy Award for the best foreign-language film) and ranked for a time in the number-one place on the German box-office charts—a feat which no director even half-associated with the *Neue Welle* has come anywhere near matching.

Schlöndorff holds a position in the *Neue Welle* similar to the one occupied by Alain Resnais (*Hiroshima, Mon Amour; Last Year in Marienbad*) in the French *Nouvelle Vague*. As exemplified by Truffaut, Chabrol, and Godard, the *Nouvelle Vague* was characterized by sincerity and innocent ardor expressed in a technique that ranged from simple to clumsy—a style thought fitting for the expression of unabashed, direct youthful feeling. But Resnais's style was polished, immaculate, oblique, allusive. I remember the debates to this day: is Resnais a member of the *Nouvelle Vague*?

So with Schlöndorff. His film technique is clean and accomplished, particularly compared with his *Neue Welle* compatriots, most of whom are not so much clumsy as positively slovenly. He is literate; most of them are brash. His politics on the face of it seem more moderate than theirs, but this moderation is only relative, as can be seen from a simple listing of the subjects of his films. His first, *Young Törless*, was an adaptation of a novel by Robert Musil about the sufferings of a sensitive youth at a German military school: Schlöndorff as a German anti-militarist. His next film was *Michael Kohlhaas*, from the Kleist tale, the story of a 17th-century German fighting for justice against the powers-that-were, a script into which a sizable amount of modern revolutionary "relevance" was inserted. Then came a women's-liberation film, starring his wife, a feminist militant named Margarethe von Trotta, in which the vilest thing that seems to happen to the wife of a successful lawyer after she leaves him is that she is forced to go out and work alongside male sales clerks—which is to say that she does not automatically retain her husband's position in the affluent class.

Schlöndorff next made an adaptation of a Heinrich Böll novel, *The Lost Honor of Katharina Blum*, a highly polemical attack on abuses of the free press in West Germany, specifically the politically conservative Springer press. I myself could not find a word in the film which conveyed the notion (to recast the problem in American terms) that the *National Inquirer*, as it were, is the price we pay for the Washington *Post*. All stops were out for Schlöndorff's next-to-last film, *Coup de Grâce*, a wildly romantic elegy to a Bolshevik rising in Germany's Baltic provinces.

The Tin Drum itself is a faithful, literal, uninspired translation of the novel to the screen. We have a collection of passable acting performances, undistinguished camera work. The symbolism is, of course, the same. After the Nazis have come to power, Oskar, a three-year-old child in Danzig (Grass's home town), coolly throws himself from a cellar staircase, damaging perhaps his pituitary gland and preventing his further growth, thus marking his separation, and that of the high German culture, from the monstrous Germany a-growing. As we follow the adventures of this permanent child, ingeniously freed from the onerous obligation to become a German soldier or to take part in any other way in the Nazi madness, we are shown the traditional German wallowing in food, mildly repellent, so often satirized by German free spirits. Next we have a bit of mildly repellent sex. What we do not have is the author's "voice."

In reading *The Tin Drum*, we do not see a real eternal three-year-old, any more than in Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* we see a man changed into a real cockroach, or in Bulgakov's *The Heart of a Dog* (a wonderful parody of the Soviet vision of the perfectibility of man), a real rat-chasing alley mongrel elevated precariously to human status. In the movie version of *The Tin Drum* we have nothing to fix our eyes on but a blank-faced child actor named David Bennent. Film directors are nowhere near as helpless as stage directors when faced with the problem of attempting a directorial equivalent of a writer's style, and there are a number of virtuoso directors whose language of expression in their own medium is individual, at least achieving a distinctive artistic personality. This is not the case with Volker Schlöndorff, and it is certainly not the case with Volker Schlöndorff being kept on a tight leash—and by all accounts totally intimidated—by Günter Grass, who retained story control over the picture.

IF THERE is some question about Schlöndorff's membership in the *Neue Welle*, there is none at all about Rainer Werner Fassbinder's. In fact, all students of the matter agree that he is the central and dominant figure of the movement.

What is one to say of this demiurge who, after an entire generation, has been chosen to rekindle the flame of German film culture? A militant homosexual, Fassbinder

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dresses in faded jeans and black leather jackets, like a Hell's Angel. He has been known to erupt in paeans of praise to the Baader-Meinhof terrorist group, and has appeared naked in some of his own movies. He grinds out four films a year regularly, shooting at the speed of a television director, and, attempts at elegance notwithstanding, by and large his films look it. He acknowledges as his master none other than Douglas Sirk, author of such quintessential Hollywood trash as *Imitation of Life* with Lana Turner and *Magnificent Obsession* with Rock Hudson.

His own films seem to be mostly about dominance. *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* is typical. Three lesbians are enclosed in a small apartment. Petra (Margit Carstensen) dominates the scene until she falls in love with another, younger lesbian (Hanna Schygulla). The ascendance this gives the younger woman incapacitates Petra completely, and it is only when she succeeds in breaking out of the tyranny of love that her subjugation by the younger woman is brought to an end. For Fassbinder is no friend of love, affirming that it is "the best, most insidious, most effective instrument of social repression." Well, this is at least a refreshing shift from the day when the bards and minstrels of the counterculture were chattering about nothing but love, love, love.

Fassbinder's latest film to appear in America, *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, is his first to achieve a substantial commercial success. In this country it has been hailed as a masterpiece, although a suspicious amount of praise has gone to its leading lady, the same Hanna Schygulla who subjugated Petra von Kant and who has now been compared with Marlene Dietrich and Jean Harlow, and called "sweet," "tough," "splendid," and "mysterious." She has also been said to reach "a new level of sexual knowingness." Certainly a good deal of the time she strides about assertively in her underwear, which invariably features a black garter belt.

As to the film itself, once again, alas, as so often in these new German films, we are up to our necks in allegory. In the opening scene, the young Maria Braun is being married to a German soldier in the midst of a World War II aerial bombardment. All is leaden and schematic, and the acting here (as throughout the film) is stilted and wooden. The soldier goes off to war and Maria does a bit of black-marketeering. Germany is immediately defeated and Maria gets a job as a bar girl in an off-limits tavern. Since the main conquering power is the United States, she takes up with an American army sergeant, and to add greater richness, the sergeant is black. Maria's husband returns from the war and finds the two making love, whereupon Maria, somewhat bafflingly, hits the sergeant on the head with a bottle and kills him (Germany resurgent?). But in a stroke worthy of Fassbinder's master, Douglas Sirk, Maria's husband takes the rap, going to prison for murder in her place.

Then begins the picture's real story: the rise of Maria, and Germany, from the economic ashes. Maria picks up a French industrialist on a train (the French-German alliance being the heart of the new Europe), becomes his mistress, assistant, and finally second-in-command. The financial ascent of Maria shows all the knowledgeability of the workings of big business of one of the more practical Horatio Alger books. Although remaining the mistress of the French industrialist, Maria continues to visit her husband in prison, and when the two men meet at one point, the industrialist congratulates the husband for being the recipient of "true love." (This means, still allegorically I suppose, that the new, postwar Germany, of which Maria Braun is a dishearteningly simple symbol, is still bonded and devoted to the essence of the old, Nazi, Germany symbolized by her wartime soldier husband. Since in Fassbinder's view love is subjugation, this, in turn, seems to mean that in the rise of the new Germany from the ashes, it is the old Germany that has triumphed.)

In the closing scenes of the movie, to the voice of Konrad Adenauer on TV, Maria inherits the Frenchman's fortune, her husband is released from prison, and the two Brauns are reunited in power and opulence. But as if the turns of the plot were not unrealistic enough, the film has a trick ending. The flame is extinguished on the stove in Maria's kitchen while the gas continues to escape, hissing. Maria strikes a match to light a cigarette. There is an explosion. And that's the end of Maria.

There has been a small debate about this ending, some maintaining that Maria ignites the explosion deliberately. I find this completely impossible to believe as she shows no sign whatsoever of contrition, and does not look one bit like a woman about to commit suicide. Others put the explosion down to accident, but as meaning that this new German prosperity contains the seeds of its own destruction (yet to come, of course). One analyst proclaimed, "It doesn't make any difference." And from one point of view at least it does not, there being no question whatever that Rainer Werner Fassbinder deeply desires the destruction of this new Germany.

Thus: Fassbinder, the most influential German director on the world scene since the Nazi propagandist Leni Riefenstahl (*The Triumph of the Will*). He lives in West Germany, but is not grateful for the artistic freedom this affords him. He has received many grants and subsidies from the West German government, but has not let this inhibit his gleeful eagerness to attack "the system." He is thirty-three, has made some 35 feature films. As a film-maker he is serious, supremely self-confident, hard-working but impatient, slapdash, adolescent, strikingly ungifted. To say that he is not strongly attached to democratic institutions is an austere understatement.

But even Fassbinder is no preparation for Hans-Jürgen Syberberg, whose *Our Hitler, A Film From Germany* bids fair, for at least a season or so, to be the *Finnegans Wake* of cinema. By this I mean that it is a "difficult" work, which will be seen by only a few thousand people in this country (and whose very nature excludes a larger audience), but that the ardor and erudition of its admirers are such as to give it a position of great respect.

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Syberberg is quick to dissociate himself from the members of the *Neue Welle*, and they are as eager to dissociate themselves from him. They are all from the western provinces of the old Germany; Syberberg is a Prussian. They grew up in the West, he in the East. He fled to West Germany at the age of eighteen (and, if nothing else, is singularly free of Communist pieties). Except for Alexander Kluge, they were all born at, or after, the end of World War II; Syberberg was already ten at the time of the German defeat, and has clear recollections of Nazi Germany. They are all strung out somewhere on the radical Left, he is a champion of the mystical Right. Fassbinder and the other members of the *Neue Welle* were clearly not meant to be fast friends of Syberberg, united, as they are, only by their common contempt for the values of present-day West Germany.

Our Hitler, A Film From Germany, called by Susan Sontag "one of the great works of the 20th century" is, and is meant to be, intimidating. Its seven-and-a-half-hour length alone is a defiant challenge. The average commercial movie is before the camera three months, a long day's work usually producing something like two minutes of screen time. The director shoots and cuts, shoots and cuts, then cuts and cuts and cuts and cuts, to prepare his finished film. Syberberg would have none of this, and directed his entire seven-and-a-half-hour film in only twenty days, with no cuts, nothing eliminated, working with brazen confidence that everything he went to the trouble of shooting was worth showing to the audience. There is no modesty here of any sort. The spectator knows that the author views the film as a concluding section of a trilogy of which the two first parts are earlier Syberberg films on mad King Ludwig of Bavaria, Wagner's patron and builder of fanciful castles, and Karl May, Germany's Zane Grey, two earlier "German dreamers." The program (for there is a program) announces that the Hitler "cycle" will be in four parts, imposingly and romantically titled: "The Grail," "A German Dream," "The End of Winter's Tale," "We Children of Hell." The spectator is aware even during the film's opening frames that he is seeing a work of hugely serious intent. But what is he actually seeing?

Not much. The whole movie takes place on a single sound stage, and little is done to make it look like anything other than a sound stage. If the principal locus of the film evokes anything, it is a shabbily equipped off-Broadway theater attempting to do Wagner. What little live action there is takes place in front of rear-projection transparencies of Ludwig's palace in Munich, deserted chambers of the Reich Chancellery, Berchtesgaden, the streets of Berlin. These are deliberately unprepossessing so as not to distract from the discourses we are to hear.

WHEN the set is deployed in three dimensions as on a stage, it contains, typically: department-store dummies, sometimes in Nazi uniform; a puppet or ventriloquist's dummy of Hitler or one of the other Nazi leaders; a hangman's noose, sometimes with an effigy of Hitler hanging from it; a model of the ash tree from the first production of *Die Walküre*; a globe of the earth (to show our concerns are cosmic); a wicker armchair (to invite us to reflection); dead leaves on the floor (melancholy); other associational busts, posters, pictures; a director's chair; an outsize black megaphone; and a ubiquitous crystal paperweight containing, as the program notes tell us, a model of Edison's Black Maria, the first movie studio and "symbol of the world of our inner projections" (because Syberberg believes that Hitler was, we must remember, a great film director). Over this is blown, during the hours, vast quantities of smoke and fumes from dry ice to show we are in hell, either Hitler's hell or the hell of today's "debased" society, characterized by Syberberg as "freedom without a human face." In the first half of the film the typical scene is of a single human figure, wandering, talking, amid dummies and cardboard cutouts. In the latter half, for perspective, discourses are frequently delivered before a rear-projection of the star-filled night sky.

What the viewer is given in these settings is an unending series of monologues, meditations, ruminations about Hitler. We have actors playing Hitler, Himmler, Hitler's valet, Hitler's private movie projectionist, but a great deal of the time we have unidentified actors merely talking, at least some of whom are plainly intended to be Syberberg himself, judging by such tags as, "As a film-maker, I. . . ." The program refers to them as "narrators" but there is no connected narrative line. At one point one of them says (in substance), "I have here some research notes which I was unable to work into the film"—after which he reads for perhaps an hour. There is never any action, and on the rare occasions when two live actors appear together in front of the camera they generally do not talk to each other: only one speaks, as if to himself. The music we hear is mostly Wagner, of course.

In one of the opening scenes, we see a circus ringmaster dressed in white-satin frock coat, top hat, face heavily made up. He announces the "greatest show on earth, the rehearsal for the end of the world." The film we are about to see is no "money spinner which feeds on guilt and repentance," he declaims defiantly. "This is no guilt exploitation movie!" Since *Our Hitler*, so poor in images, is essentially a literary work, a specimen of the prose that the audience is required to ingest for seven-and-a-half hours is worth quoting. Here is the ringmaster, still describing the film we are about to see:

> Not porno, not underground film, not a good entertainment film, not documentary, or social criticism or Hollywood Boulevard film or horror show. But a journey into the midst of night, a hell ride to paradise lost, into our inner self. The mystery play of a historical Dance of Death in the black studio [movie studio] of our fantasy, the ascetic work of mourning on the end of an epoch, millions of dead. In olden times one would have called it an epos, a poem, requiem, oratorio; an attempt to find a new German identity through film. And also about the heritage of Hitler in our present world, something about the infernal victory of quantitative democracy, about the calmness of

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melancholy and the thesis that Hitler can only be defeated with Richard Wagner. The Last Judgment of our world before Hitler, who, not Christ, poses the question: What have you done after me, with your freedom?

Passing over the turgid, verbless style and lapses of coherent syntax, I will point out only that, so early in the film, the victory of democracy has already been called "infernal," and Hitler has been evoked as a divine figure who will sit in judgment on the world at the Day of Reckoning.

BEFORE too long we are presented with the film's cast of characters, particularly Hitler. In a strobe-lit sequence (the only one in the film in which there is sharp cutting), and to the accompaniment of Hitler's actual radio speeches on the sound track, we are shown Hitler as a house painter, Hitler as Parsifal, Hitler as Napoleon, Hitler as Nero, Hitler as Hamlet in the gravedigger's scene and addressing a skull marked "*Jude*," Hitler as Frankenstein's monster, Hitler in Nazi uniform balancing the globe on his head (he bounces it off like a soccer ball), Hitler as a Chicago gangster, Hitler as a jack-in-the-box, Hitler as Charlie Chaplin playing *The Great Dictator*.

The sequence is shot in a manner evoking a speeded-up silent-film comedy and, coming early on, as it does, before their attention wandered, has prompted some critics to describe the movie as a satire. It must be understood, however, that allusions in *Our Hitler* to other films and film-makers are not incidental—ineffectual attempts at virtuosity or coy winks at cinéaste colleagues—but absolutely fundamental and central to Syberberg's movie; hence the use of Edison's Black Maria as the predominant symbol and the endless wandering about of Syberberg's twelve-year-old daughter with her hair draped in loose coils of 35-mm. film stock. For Syberberg has constructed the stupendous conceit, which he spells out for us in so many words in his meditations, that Hitler—since he never visited the war front but had the daily newsreel footage screened for him privately before it was released to German theaters, and since nothing remains of the Nazi period but the films (not quite true)—was in fact not really engaged in war or politics but *was actually making a movie*, the ultimate Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

And so we are off on our meditations about Hitler. Noted among the hours of rambling ruminations from the different narrators:

> Only the defeat of his arms has made us turn against him. . . . What if we had been first to build the atomic bomb? . . . In five hundred years who will ask if Frau Schulz was happy? [repeated] . . . Democracy, the source of misery in the 20th century. . . . Jews are the victors of Versailles and of the world. . . . Germans, now the frightened colonial slaves of foreign ideologies. . . . Joseph McCarthy—look how many Jews were willing to support him! . . . The Devil is loose in our wolfish society. . . . Today you need money to be human. . . . Tasteless U.S. chicken. . . . Whoever controls film controls the future. . . . We're going to have to get rid of this notion of Jesus as a circumcised Jew. . . . The Hitler within us all [repeated many times]. . . . Ten thousand who beat their breasts and one fool who entertains them, laughing. . . . All are rogues, including me, but let me be the greatest! . . . He who sacrifices is chosen. . . . The redeemer redeemed. . . .

Also early in the film—in perhaps the most grotesque moment of those seven-and-a-half hours—a narrator, after citing the war's fifty million dead and repeatedly evoking the Nazis' extermination program, offers as a strict parallel Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's "butchery" (which is to say, reduction to normal running time) of the original seven-hour version of Erich von Stroheim's silent film, *Greed*. He rants on about Hollywood's "enemies of culture": Louis B. Mayer, Irving Thalberg, Gloria Swanson, Will Hays.

LEAVING Part I, "The Grail," for Part II, "A German Dream," we come to some interesting passages. An actor appears as Hitler's private movie projectionist and tells us that Hitler liked Walt Disney and Fred Astaire. A great favorite of his was a German film on the Trapp family, whose story served as the basis for the later American film *The Sound of Music*. Soon we see Hitler (Heinz Schubert, a distinguished member of Brecht's Berliner Ensemble), dressed in an imperial Roman toga, rise from the grave of Richard Wagner to deliver a long harangue situating himself in European history. He learned from Rome, England, the Jews themselves, he says, affirming that he is the inevitable product of Western European (not merely German) civilization. "I am the bad conscience of democratic government!" he declares. But the kernel of his entire speech is contained in one sentence, addressed to Europe, the world, everyone: *I am your most secret wishes.*

Then comes a forty-minute monologue (half the length of a standard movie) by an actor playing Hitler's valet. After Syberberg's rambling meditations, this compendium of facts seems oddly fascinating. We learn that Hitler breakfasted on two cups of warm milk, ten biscuits, and the broken-up bits of a bar of bitter chocolate. It took him twenty-two minutes to get ready in the morning. He shaved with two blades. We are told the brand name of his shaving cream, of his hair tonic. He changed hair tonic for a while, but then went back to his earlier preference. Hitler wore no undershirt, short underpants. He never wore colored shirts, never sports shirts, never a belt, only suspenders, and only thin socks, even in winter. Left to himself he would wear old boots, crumpled uniforms, "impossible" ties. It had to be explained to him that with light suits, black shoes were a "horror." But he was a genial host. After 1942, however, he watched no more newsreels. (So much for the theory of Hitler as film-maker: unlike "the great Stroheim," he abandoned his movie in the middle, missing all the climactic scenes.)

AT THE mid-point dinner break, after almost four hours of film, the themes of *Our Hitler* are abundantly clear. Hitler was evil, but it was because we are all evil. We expressed our evil through him. "Where would Hitler have been without us?" This is the meaning of all the puppets and ventrilo-

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quists' dummies (Heinz Schubert is the only "live" Hitler): the dummies, after all, say only what the ventriloquists, on whose knees they sit, want them to say. Occasionally the "we" of the narrators refers only to Germans (as, "We elected him," and "What if we had been first to build the atomic bomb?") but—particularly in passages assigning final responsibility and guilt—the film says again and again that all of mankind, or at the very least all members of Western civilization, are responsible for Hitler. In saying this, *Our Hitler* becomes a massive exculpation of Germany. The film is also, plainly, incoherent, bombastic, sophomoric, half-baked, and self-contradictory.

Nonetheless, at mid-point, many members of the audience the day I saw it patently still felt respect for a work that impressed them as severe, dense, forbidding. On the other hand, some 20 per cent of the spectators left at the dinner hour, never to return. Which is unfortunate, because it is the second half of *Our Hitler* which contains both the best and the worst.

The structure of the film is nowhere near as clear as the titles of sections would imply, but at the opening of Part III, "The End of Winter's Tale," the war, at least, is advanced. Against pictures of Nazi officers at the front on the transparencies, and later other war scenes, we see Heinrich Himmler, back in Berlin, being massaged by his Finnish masseur. Himmler mournfully talks of karma, says he is a Buddhist. He explains regretfully that Jews are subhuman (though he later attributes Heydrich's beautiful playing of Mozart to his "Jewish blood") and that the Nazis are compelled to exterminate them. But he also expresses his fear and horror at this necessity, hideous as it will later appear to the German people. The masseur (in a rare piece of dialogue) says he would be afraid to have to account for the Nazi misdeeds. Himmler assures him that they must all take this sacrifice upon themselves, for the good of Germany. He acknowledges the great cruelties the Jews are suffering, but compares them to the cruelties that others have suffered in history—for example, the extermination of the Red Indians by the Americans. "It is the curse of the great that they must exterminate to create new life," he declares. At the end of the scene, the masseur pleads, "Reichsführer! Repent your cruel deeds!" Himmler suddenly begs the masseur not to leave him alone, and kisses his hand. Our portrait of the second personage of the Third Reich, Heinrich Himmler: lonely, mournful, a martyr to the Nazi view of German destiny.

AT THE end of Part III we have something resembling a debate. One of the narrators is upbraiding a Hitler dummy, sitting on his knee, for turning Germany into "a new colony for America." "You ruined UFA!," he says (the pre-Hitler movie studio in Berlin), "ask Hollywood about its new overseas markets!"

Hitler rambles disconnectedly. His ideas have prevailed everywhere, he says, his voice croaking. "We have conquered everywhere, but in a subtle way." He gives examples: Idi Amin, Zionism, Death Squads in Brazil, Chile, Red Brigades in Italy, Yasir Arafat with a pistol at the United Nations. In East Germany, Stalinism. In West Germany, terrorists, anarchists, women's lib, the Volkswagen Beetle. In America, the Lockheed scandal. "Look at Russia. A stroke of genius to classify political opposition as mental disturbance!"

The narrator again attempts to draw up an indictment. Hitler split Germany. The Russians are on the Elbe. Without Hitler there would have been no state of Israel. (These are all consequent upon Hitler's having *lost*, of course.) He blames Hitler for having destroyed the German Jews, "the best Germans! the shrewdest!" He also regrets the loss of more sensitive Jewish types like Franz Kafka and Robert Musil. "Who do the Jews have now? Moshe Dayan!" Hitler still doesn't seem very repentant. "All are guilty," he croaks. "But who is closer to God than the guilty?"

Again and again toward the conclusion of Part III, in a Judgment Day vein, with the music rising, the film seems to be ending. But it staggers on. Indeed, we have almost two more hours to go.

Part IV, "We Children of Hell," incredibly (as if we have had lots of action up to now), is little but a prodigiously long rhetorical evocation of the spirit of Hitler by two narrators in alternation, sometimes with the Hitler dummy lying nearby, sometimes against the galaxies of the night sky. But this section also contains the most blatant statements of the film's meaning. The location of the "hell" is now unequivocal: not Nazi Germany but present-day West Germany, the modern world.

A narrator recalls Hitler's thinking. Order and subordination to a cause are the essential qualities of Germany. The nation was defeated by foreign ideas of republicanism, subjugated by alien ideas of democratic representation. Now the narrator proceeds on his own. Hitler was Siegfried, beset by enemies. Hitler was the catharsis of European history, the medium for the spirit of his age, the "mirror of our own dreams and passions." We hear such snatches as "happy guilt" (or perhaps "joyous guilt"), "Christ triumphs over death," "Hitler was right."

To beguile us after this high thinking, we are offered anecdotes. An American GI, questioning von Schirach's three-year-old daughter, snuffed out his cigarette on her arm. Rudolf Hess, on one occasion, did not have the heart to kill a wasp. He was "too kind," not of the stuff of Hitler. Hitler wanted to build a Reich that would live for centuries. Again, "In five hundred years, who will ask if Frau Schulz was happy?" Charlemagne. Napoleon. Hitler was "the last maker of European history." He dreamed "of Aryan world dominion . . . of the rule of a pure race over the world." "What failed?" asks the narrator. We hear wartime German radio bulletins of "enemy planes over the Rhineland," then Hitler's real voice, exalted: "We go into this battle as into a church service."

In the final exhortation, delivered mostly against the stars of far galaxies, the film takes one last step: *the world awaits the New Hitler*. "He is already among us," we hear. "He is already in us. . . . Who will he be?" The narrator now castigates the Old Hitler as

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the "executioner of Western civilization." He holds Hitler responsible for the "plague of materialism," the "shaming rat race for profit," the diminution of authority, fast-food chains, pollution ("They have taken away the sunset!"). He blames him, specifically, for "everything modern." (But again, all these phenomena, surely in the mind of the film-maker, are the result of Hitler's having *lost*.) "Freedom without a human face!" cries the narrator. "Hitler, here is your victory!"

There are more prophecies of the coming of the New Hitler, already among us. Finally, as the stars fly toward us, we have Hitler as godhead. "What have you done with the world since me?" Hitler took upon himself all the world's evil, we are told once more, but "Who is closer to God than the guilty?" Among the last lines we hear is: "Hitler is the angel who bears the blame for the world's sins." The film closes on the ultimate symbol of mission, pursued unsuccessfully by Hitler but calling to us yet: *Der Gral*, the Grail.

THE day I saw *Our Hitler*, at its fifth public screening in New York, the end was greeted with a hearty chorus of hissing from the battered surviving spectators. Did they find the film too long? Artistically unsatisfying? Or did they perceive that the film they had witnessed was permeated from start to finish with Nazi thinking?

Syberberg's defense in depth is his incoherence. Many, many statements made in the movie are contradicted fifteen minutes later. But the essential burden of the film is never contradicted. Hitler is described as magnificent, evil, an angel, a devil, but when he is called the Redeemer no one ever says he was *not* the Redeemer. No one ever says he did *not* represent the secret wishes of all of us, that we are *not* all responsible for Hitler.

Intertwined with its attitude toward Hitler is the film's deep hatred of liberal democracy. What the movie seems to be saying, ultimately, is that Hitler, despite the nobility of his attempt to lift us from the mire of liberal democracy, went wrong. His vision was evil. But it is necessary to *have* a vision. And, next time around, the New Hitler, with a new mission—as yet unrevealed—will lead us to a higher, exalted sphere, to an earthly paradise.

Susan Sontag, who has been *Our Hitler*'s chief publicist, has conceived the notion that the film represents, at last, the acceptance of German guilt for the Nazi past—a view of such wrong-mindedness as to be breathtaking. The film, on behalf of Germany, accepts no guilt that it doesn't instantly distribute to everyone else, to all of us. There is not a whisper of true contrition in the entire film. It is a work of fierce, bitter, angry German nationalism, reminiscent, in fact, of the mood that called forth Hitler to begin with. Why should Germany be unloved? it demands. Interestingly, it is in Germany itself, where perhaps they know what the movie is about, that *Our Hitler* is hated with a passion. It is only abroad that it has received such extravagant praise.

Syberberg himself does not give Miss Sontag's thesis much support in his interviews. He is relaxed and glib in his "blame" of Germany for Hitler, but adds immediately: "I cannot today point my finger and say that this one was wrong, and that one was wrong. . . . Hitler's story is . . . the entire history of European occidental life." And in another interview: "It's not only German history; it's the history of Western culture."

Having spread responsibility this widely, he casts doubt on what he means by "blame" to begin with by strenuously objecting to the whole process of attribution of guilt: "Even if you want to educate people in a political way, there's no reason to show them who's guilty. . . . What for?" Asked if his film condemns Hitler, he says simply: "No. . . . I sometimes think that Hitler was a poor guy; much too small for what he wanted." (It is hard to see how a film can accept German "guilt" for Hitler without even condemning him.) Asked if he favors the continuing prosecution of Nazi war criminals, he is equally plain: "No. To take revenge is useless. What's done is done. . . . I prefer to try to change a man. . . . You cannot change Rudolf Hess even if he stays in prison until he dies. He is a poor, pathetic man. I believe we are much *more* guilty [my emphasis] to keep him locked up in a cage for more than thirty years. . . . It is wrong to regard the Nazis as barbarians, even the SS in the concentration camps. Most of them were ordinary Germans: kind, bourgeois, often of the middle class. Most of them never had a chance to kill a Jew. . . ."

Syberberg's attitude toward Jews is worth noticing. He disapproves in the strongest terms of people profiting financially from memoirs of the Nazi period. "People now make gold out of the ashes of Auschwitz," he says with distaste. "The same people: Jews who perhaps lost members of their family now make money out of the ashes of Auschwitz. How Goebbels would laugh!" Syberberg must realize that the notion that money-grubbing is an essential Jewish trait—and that avarice in Gentile society is the result of Jewish influence—is central to historic anti-Semitism. On the other hand, Syberberg admires handsome, young Israeli soldiers carrying machine guns—as, indeed, did Adolf Eichmann.

SO SYBERBERG is free of Communist pieties, and Fassbinder is free of Nazi pieties, but both of them despise liberal democracy. Interestingly, neither has won inordinately high esteem at home. It is mainly in democratic countries abroad, above all in America, that they have both been greeted with thrilled acclaim. The situation is not without irony.

Would Goebbels have laughed? I think not, actually. His sense of the humorous was not noticeably stronger than that of Gauleiter Julius Streicher, who went to the gallows screaming, "Purim, 1946!" These men—Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels, Streicher—had a vision, but it was not of impressing audiences at Avery Fisher Hall.

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Books in Review

Beyond Self-Interest

FREE TO CHOOSE: A PERSONAL STATEMENT. By MILTON and ROSE FRIEDMAN. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 338 pp. $9.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL NOVAK

MILTON FRIEDMAN is the economist my intellectual mentors warned me against. The censors of the Left always spoke his name in a certain way: an ideologue, trapped in abstractions, out of touch with reality—dangerous, too. So it surprised me to encounter Milton Friedman, the man, on television in his recent series on PBS called, like the book he has written with his wife, *Free to Choose*. He is smaller and looks far more vulnerable than I had expected. There is about him none of the hauteur of John Kenneth Galbraith. Friedman's English retains traces of the accents of working-class New York; he strives for plainness and street sense.

The ten television programs are fun. They are at times even startling, since those of us who grew up in the democratic-socialist tradition have not often had to confront an effective champion of capitalism. Arguing as the viewer must with Friedman is not like arguing with the Chamber of Commerce. In tone of voice, intellectual bent, and style of argument, Milton Friedman seems like "one of us." Where did he—or we—go wrong? Watching Friedman on television was, for me, a sort of journey of self-criticism.

As engaging as the television shows are, the book that accompanies them is more difficult. The Friedmans do not write with the elegance or wit of Professor Galbraith, and they load chapter after chapter, like freight cars, with heavy burdens of fact. The statistics they offer are fascinating, since they usually challenge the conventional wisdom and one has to linger over them to absorb them, but this makes the book slow going. Reading the Friedmans is not a free lunch. Perhaps for this reason, among others, some critics on the Left have voiced the hope that not many people will read the book; unfortunately for them, *Free to Choose*—like William Simon's untouted *A Time for Truth* two years ago—is assaulting the top of the best-seller lists.

The ten chapters of the book follow exactly the outline of the ten television shows. The Friedmans begin with "The Power of the Market" and then discuss each of the major problems of political economy faced by our nation and others: controls, the monetary crisis, security, equality, the schools, consumers, workers, and inflation. They conclude with a chapter reflecting on "the new tide" in political economy.

Milton Friedman's thought is coherent and consistent, so that much depends on the power of his premises. As it turns out, they are a little different from their conventional definition. "The key insight of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*," in Friedman's view,

> is misleadingly simple: if an exchange between two parties is voluntary, it will not take place unless both believe they will benefit from it. Most economic fallacies derive from the neglect of this simple insight, from the tendency to assume that there is a fixed pie, that one party can gain only at the expense of another.

Not only a few economic fallacies, entire schools of political economy are based on a denial of this "simple insight." One is drawn to consider it more closely.

Friedman does not argue that economic decisions are made in the best of all possible worlds. Nobody has "purely" voluntary choices; in the real world, every economic agent is constrained by his own resources and by circumstances beyond his control. In any given transaction, some agents have more freedom to choose than others. For example, an employer offering jobs in circumstances of massive unemployment has more freedom to choose which workers to hire than workers have freedom to choose which jobs to accept. In the real world, moreover, both employers and labor pools migrate; they have freedom to choose *places*. But no one is perfectly free.

In Friedman's view, however, the "zero-sum game" school of political economy misses the factor of growth. It is true that shares in economic growth are not equally distributed, and that some gain more than others. Still, real growth has vindicated the promises of democracy by raising the living standards of all, not only of productive workers but also of the poor and the unemployed. Such growth has the further effect that the children of the poor, better nourished and better educated, have opportunities to leapfrog into higher circles, generating some real circulation of elites. While various income groups over time may not differ much in their proportional share of national income or national wealth, *individuals* within cohorts rise (and fall) from one level to another. Such events are possible because growth generates mobility, dynamism, and structural change in opportunities. A "no-growth" economy, by contrast, tends to freeze individuals in place.

Marxists like to argue that markets, especially labor markets, are only "formally" free; in reality, they say, workers remain "wage slaves" and are treated like "commodities." Some commodities. Workers have proven to be far from inert masses. They migrate, organize, take jobs and quit them, seize opportunities to improve their condition, upgrade their skills, treat the economy as a ladder, and (in good proportion) educate their children to surpass their own attainments. At least, they do these things where markets are free and

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economies dynamic. Without question, workers have less "freedom to choose" than investors or employers. But it is more than patronizing—it is plainly wrong—to imagine that they value economic freedom less than their "betters." Many of us can recognize Friedman's point in the differential histories of members of our own (poor, working-class) families.

Max Weber once said that it is a "kindergarten" notion to think that capitalism introduced self-interest, acquisitiveness, and greed into the world. Such qualities are universal among humans in every political economy, including socialist economies. Friedman points out that the "self-interest" identified by Adam Smith is a cut or two above the "acquisitiveness" which socialists like R. H. Tawney believe to be the mainspring of capitalism:

> Economics has been berated for allegedly drawing far-reaching conclusions from a wholly unrealistic "economic man" who is little more than a calculating machine, responding only to monetary stimuli. That is a great mistake. Self-interest is not myopic selfishness. It is whatever it is that interests the participants, whatever they value, whatever goals they pursue. The scientist seeking to advance the frontiers of his discipline, the missionary seeking to convert infidels to the true faith, the philanthropist seeking to bring comfort to the needy—all are pursuing their interests, as they see them, as they judge them by their own values.

The mainspring of the market system, for Friedman, is not self-interest, narrowly conceived, but *rational* self-interest, as determined by rational individuals choosing for themselves.

Finally, there is Friedman's consistent and constant emphasis on the individual. It is this insistence that most marks Friedman as a "liberal" thinker, before liberalism (in the 1930's) came to be thought of as "collectivist liberalism." Friedman is by no means a conservative of the school of Edmund Burke, who in the 18th century denounced the acid erosions which he saw the free market and the free individual pouring upon the organic connectedness of traditional community life. Burke celebrated the rationality of tradition; Friedman celebrates the free choices of the rational individual. Friedman, as *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962) already made clear, stands in an intermediate position between conservatives like Burke, Churchill, Russell Kirk, T.S. Eliot, etc., and "collectivist liberals" like Roosevelt, John Dewey, Galbraith, etc.

Two features in Friedman's thought seem to me inadequate.

First, although he does see that political freedom and economic freedom are indissolubly connected in the world of fact (if not in the world of logic)—and this is a tremendously important insight—he

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misses the extent to which the economic system is only one-third of the entire social system he means to defend. Besides its economic component, this system has both a political component and a moral-cultural component. One cannot understand the behavior of Americans without grasping the many ways in which these three nourish, guide, and restrain one another.

Friedman is right to argue that in practice there can be no real political freedoms or moral-cultural freedoms if human beings are not free to make their own economic choices about their labor, earnings, investments, and purchases. As Marx might say (with quite different intentions), economic realities underlie both political and moral-cultural possibilities. But those who care about economic liberties must at the same time see that these can be maintained only through political liberties and moral-cultural liberties.

As an economist, Friedman tends to see the other two systems chiefly from the perspective of the economic system. Yet, despite himself, he has been led in recent years to become an effective activist in *political* struggles to safeguard what he loves. His foray into public television indicates, as well, that he now sees the necessity of becoming engaged in the struggle over ideas, over culture. But his theoretical framework remains too far tilted toward one pole to permit him to describe this threefold system as a whole.

Thus, for example, in defending the economic autonomy of the corporation, Friedman is inclined to assign to it minimal responsibilities in the political and cultural spheres. But if economic liberties can survive only in certain political systems and under certain moral-cultural presuppositions, then economic agencies like corporations cannot escape non-economic obligations. Their responsibilities to society are larger, in the real world, than the chaste logic of economic automony envisages.

THE mention of society brings me to the second inadequate feature in Friedman's thought—the fact that he relies too heavily on an abstract notion of the individual. To my mind, the most important features of capitalism are its social structures. To begin with, there are the virtues on which a capitalist system depends—habits of hard work, reliability, cooperativeness, risk, a zest for independence and self-reliance, and the like. While these habits are practiced by individuals, they are taught by culture and transmitted by society.

Then there are the economic practices of families, by which, often enough, some individuals (usually in the older generation) sacrifice their own consumption so that others (usually their children) can attain the sorts of education and experience that will improve the economic well-being of the family as a whole. Classical economists often talk as if rational self-interest were centered in the self. The human reality is far more often family centered.

If the single greatest emphasis of capitalism is on the corporation, this too is more a social reality than a domain of rugged individualism. Corporate behavior is, if anything, difficult for rugged individualists; it is often faulted for being excessively other-directed, conformist, and bureaucratic. On the other side, for many workers today (on the line as in the office), there is greater camaraderie, fellowship, and social life at work than they find at home.

Finally, the market itself is a social organism. Many critics of the market see it as impersonal, alienating, interested only in the "cash nexus." Friedman is right to turn these criticisms upside-down in order to give credit to the market for its refusal to respect persons and for its inner imperative to treat all comers equally and without regard to religion, ethnicity, race, or class. But the impersonality of the market also makes it an equalizer, a teacher of tolerance, a way out of the ghettos of the past. Wherever the market goes—as into the American South after World War II—the ancient forms of organic connectedness, whose qualities were celebrated by Edmund Burke, must yield to new forms of openness, mobility, and tolerance.

By the very clarity of his logic, Milton Friedman forces us to break with much of the conventional wisdom with which we grew up. At the same time, he invites us to take a larger—a more social, communal, inclusive—view of the system in which we live than he has yet done himself.

Founding Mother

SUMMONED TO JERUSALEM: THE LIFE OF HENRIETTA SZOLD, FOUNDER OF HADASSAH. By JOAN DASH. *Harper & Row. 348 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by JULIUS WEINBERG

ZIONISM has fallen on hard times of late. Many Israelis find Zionist ideology irrelevant; many American Jews find it either obsolete or, on occasion, downright embarrassing; liberals and leftists—Jews and non-Jews alike—find it chauvinistic; Sunday schools have replaced Zionism with a new growth industry, the Holocaust; and the United Nations has called it out-and-out racism. This is a curious and lamentable state of affairs for the most productive movement in Jewish life since Moses Mendelssohn left the ghetto in the mid-18th century.

The strengths of the Zionist enterprise were twofold: Zionism offered a profoundly accurate analysis of the role and ultimate fate of the Jew in the European Diaspora, and, like no other movement in modern Jewish history, it had the capacity to harness the variegated powers (and, in some instances, the weaknesses) of its adherents. *Summoned to Jerusalem*, a biography of Henrietta Szold, the founder of Hadassah in America, Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, and a network of social and medical services in Palestine in the interwar era, is a well-told tale of the capacity of the Zionist enterprise to bring immortality to a woman who would otherwise have lived and died in

JULIUS WEINBERG, *professor of history at Cleveland State University, is writing a history of American Jewry since 1945.*

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the obscurity of her self-inflicted limitations.

A core of values—in part Victorian, but largely Jewish—and a series of flights dominated the trajectory of Henrietta Szold's life. At the root lay a commitment to the values of her parents, and particularly her father, a learned Hungarian rabbi who came to Baltimore with his bride in 1859 and served that community until his death, four decades later, in 1902. This relationship—or, as Miss Szold's biographer strongly suggests, this fixation—colored much of Henrietta Szold's adult life and, as matters turned out, with both positive and negative consequences. An intelligent, devoted, hard-working yet socially immature young woman, Miss Szold spent much of the half-century after her father's death fulfilling the commitments he had left her and in search of a relationship to replace the one they had shared.

The commitments were to Jewish scholarship and to Jewish survival. This combination brought Henrietta Szold to Zionism early in life, and to a series of posts which she served with a high degree of social consciousness even as they left her personally unfulfilled. While in her twenties, she organized and headed a school for the Jewish immigrants from Russo-Poland who were streaming into the port city of Baltimore after 1881. In the 1890's, and for two decades to follow, she served as editor, translator, and secretary to the newly-founded, but meagerly funded, Jewish Publication Society of Philadelphia—for the munificent sum of $85 per month. After the turn of the century, Miss Szold, with special permission from Solomon Schechter, enrolled as a student at the all-male Jewish Theological Seminary, for the ostensible purpose of acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to edit her father's unpublished manuscripts. All these roles, Miss Szold's biographer Joan Dash suggests, represented a succession of flights from heavy—and, at times, unwanted—burdens, and were accompanied by a gnawing sense of social isolation and of her own psycho-sexual immaturity.

The years at the Seminary were climaxed by a particularly wrenching episode for Henrietta Szold: an unconsummated love affair with Louis Ginsberg, the young and charismatic prodigy of the Talmud, thirteen years her junior, who had been brought onto the Seminary faculty by Schechter. At the age of forty-three, heartbroken over Ginsberg's decision to marry another, younger woman, Henrietta Szold, in typical Victorian fashion, fled the country, with her mother at her side, on an extended trip to Europe and then to Palestine, the latter soon to become the locale of her ultimate apotheosis.

THE Zionism espoused and practiced by Henrietta Szold, both here and in Palestine, was, as one might expect, singularly American—practical, humanitarian, and philanthropic rather than ideological or political. Like other middle-class Zionists in the United States—her childhood friend, Dr. Harry Friedenwald, her cousin, Robert Szold, and her subsequent sponsors, Louis D. Brandeis and Julian Mack—Henrietta Szold did not have a "European" need for a new identity as a Jew, or for that matter for a Jewish state. Her Zionism tended to be a redefinition in Jewish terms of the Social Gospel as practiced by Jane Addams in Chicago and Lillian Wald on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, with the difference that in Palestine she often had to respond to needs far greater than any that had faced her American counterparts.

From 1920 on, when she left for Palestine to head the American Zionist Medical Unit there, until her death in her eighty-third year, in 1943, the aging spinster played a central role in the social, medical, and humanitarian programs inaugurated in Palestine by Zionists based in the United States and Europe. It was a role that brought her into considerable conflict as well. As her biographer points out, Miss Szold's interwar efforts to establish a professional level of social and medical service in Palestine clashed

Kabbalah and Art

LEO BRONSTEIN

Léo Bronstein was historian of art and late Professor Emeritus in the Fine Arts and Near Eastern Civilization at Brandeis University. His lifelong concern, whether he spoke or wrote of Iran's art or Japan's or Picasso's, was the visual representation of the history of ideas. Bronstein's interests were broad, but toward the end of his life he became especially concerned with the Jewish doctrine known as the Kabbalah. In this book he discovers ground common to Jewish mysticism and non-Jewish painters from Giovanni di Paolo in the fifteenth century to Paul Klee in the twentieth. *Distributed for Brandeis University Press.* 48 illus. (1 in color). $20.00

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with the goal of the Labor Zionists and other *halutzim* who, for the most part, looked upon the programs she headed either as extensions of *halukah*, the much-hated system of handouts from the Diaspora, or as an equally despised form of Western philanthropy. In their determination to set up a system of self-help programs and socialized medicine, the settlers in Palestine resented the more professional ministrations that Miss Szold's programs provided, even as they needed and used them.

These ideological and institutional conflicts, together with the poverty of the countryside, the failure of Zionist fund-raising in Europe and in America, the Machiavellian power plays that characterized the movement in the period between the two wars, and her own institutional and political naiveté, added to the burdens of an already overtaxed woman entering the twilight of her life. All these factors intruded on, and hampered, even so noble and crowning an enterprise as Youth Aliyah, the program to rescue Jewish children from Nazi Europe in the 1930's and during World War II.

Henrietta Szold's strengths and weaknesses are clearly etched by Joan Dash in the final segment of her biography. Even as she devoted the last ounce of her stamina to the effort to save Jewish children from the Nazis, it remained somehow beyond the capacity of this enduring woman, born in 1860, one year prior to the Civil War, to come to grips with the 20th-century world of Adolf Hitler. Operationally, she succeeded; ideologically and psychologically, she failed. In contrast to Recha Freier, the *rebbetzin* from Berlin who initiated the Youth Aliyah movement in Germany because she foresaw the ultimate destiny of German Jewry, Henrietta Szold, despite the all-consuming quality of her rescue work, "never understood," as her biographer notes, "what the Nazis were doing."

IT IS hard to know which element is the more striking, the professional or the personal, in the life of this singular woman. To emphasize the first is to lay stress on her career as the editor and translator of now-classic works of Jewish scholarship, as the founder and guiding light of Hadassah, and as the very spirit of altruism in purposeful action. To accent the second, and more poignant, element is to bring into focus the eldest daughter of the Szolds of Lombard Street, her two sisters dead in childhood, unfulfilled in love, making her anxiety-laden way to Philadelphia, New York, and Palestine, aching for that measure of personal recognition and warmth which seems continually to have been denied her. Joan Dash provides us with a detailed narrative of Henrietta Szold's career, along with an informative if occasionally simplistic "life-and-times" account of the Zionist movement, but the real strength of her volume lies in the honesty and perceptiveness of her portrait of this revered member of the Zionist pantheon.

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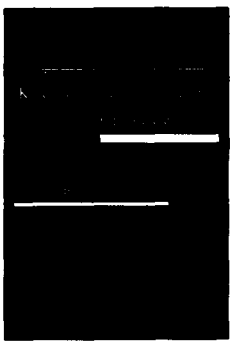

The Keynesian Episode

By W. H. Hutt

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Born in 1899, W. H. Hutt graduated from the London School of Economics and based his academic career at the University of Cape Town. He is presently Distinguished Visiting Professor of Economics at the University of Dallas. Hardcover $10.00, Paperback $4.50.

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Ideologues in Power

THE INTELLECTUALS ON THE ROAD TO CLASS POWER: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE ROLE OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA IN SOCIALISM. By GEORGE KONRAD and IVAN SZELENYI. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 252 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by PAUL HOLLANDER

WHILE the stifling of free expression and the curtailment of intellectual activity are reasonably well-known aspects of cultural life in the Soviet domain, far less is known about the circumstances of those intellectuals who do not dissent but aspire, rather, to rule or to assist those who rule. The co-authors of the present volume, two Hungarian sociologists, have performed a valuable service in shedding light on the position of this group of intellectuals—the unalienated, the assenting, the legitimizers of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union. The book was written in Hungary during 1973-74. It got the authors into some trouble with the authorities, but nothing unduly serious by East European standards. Szelenyi has been living in Australia since 1975, while Konrad, who is also a novelist, is back in Hungary after having spent two years in the West. His two novels have been published both in Hungary and in a number of Western countries.

It is the major argument of this book that in Eastern Europe the intellectuals are—or are in the process of becoming—the ruling class. Such a proposition is somewhat shocking to the received wisdom of the West, which disputes giving the title of intellectual to those ensconced in power, but it is even more heretical from the Eastern point of view, which for decades has not only claimed that the working class is the one in power, but will not even recognize the intelligentsia as a class. On the basis of their own knowledge and experience as insiders, the authors call into question the myth of the ruling position of the working class. They argue further that the workers are not just powerless but constitute "the most underprivileged class in East European society":

> Do workers receive the highest pay? Hardly. . . . Are the workers able to take greater advantage of state-subsidized benefits over and above wages? No; white-collar people live in larger and more comfortable dwellings in pleasanter neighborhoods. . . .
>
> If the leading role of the working class cannot be demonstrated from any tangible aspect of material life . . . are the workers compensated perhaps by a greater voice in the making of decisions? In fact the worker . . . has no voice in deciding . . . what will be produced, what kind of equipment he will use, . . . whether he will work for piece rates or . . . an hourly wage. . . .

Much of the book's argument hinges on the authors' definition of the term intellectual, which they are willing to extend to those whom many Westerners would call experts and bureaucrats. Intellectuals in their view are "secular experts" seeking ". . . power and reward . . . by exploiting [their] relative monopoly of complex knowledge. . . ." The distinctive quality of intellectual knowledge derives from the fact that ". . . it is concerned with the values which society accepts as part of its culture." Elsewhere they describe intellectuals as "monopolistic proprietors of knowledge." Thus, intellectuals under socialism (unless they are "marginal") emerge as a mixture of priest and planner, revolutionary and bureaucrat. These apparent contradictions are resolved by stressing the "common element of social teleology . . ." shared by bureaucrats and revolutionaries alike.

ONCE one has accepted this definition, the rest of the argument follows smoothly. If being an intellectual involves the possession of expertise and a strong ideological commitment, then it is obviously the intellectuals, or a large segment of them, who run the countries of Eastern Europe. This conception of the intelligentsia differs sharply from the wishful Western theorizing about how the rise of an apolitical technocracy with superior functional rationality might herald both internal liberalization and accommodation with the West, or else the peaceful convergence of the two types of society. Contrary to such hopes, Konrad and Szelenyi point out that in Eastern Europe "economic and technical decisions will always be primarily political decisions and . . . these political decisions will always be correlated with a unitary socialist ideology."

Thus the book reminds us that ideology still matters—a proposition which many Western politicians and social scientists have been incapable of taking seriously. It also provides a great deal of revealing detail about the operation of socialist bureaucracies which will disappoint those who believe that there is a better prospect for social equality under socialist one-party systems than under Western pluralistic ones. The authors show how socialist meritocracy, by combining technical skills with ideological commitment, actually provides a more enduring justification for inequality than the discredited values of individualism and the profit motive associated with capitalism.

Unfortunately, the book's message suffers from its style, which is often obscure and laden with jargon. Some of the terminology is not only unfamiliar to Western readers, including social scientists, but of questionable value. Why, for instance, do the authors insist on the term "rational redistributive society" to designate the East European socialist systems, and what is gained by calling intellectuals "teleological redistributors"? A more serious problem is the propensity to lump together all East European societies—along with the Soviet Union—in sweeping generalizations. This leads to a blurring of important distinctions. Surely many of the developments covered here could be attributed as much to the arrival of the Red Army in Eastern Europe during World War II as to some unfolding pattern of East European social and economic history,

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or to the traditional presence of a strong, centralized state bureaucracy and an underdeveloped bourgeoise.

THOUGH concerned with East European intellectuals, this book lends support to a rather pessimistic, or perhaps only realistic, view of intellectuals in the West as well. In particular, it suggests that many of the attributes we often take for granted in intellectuals—the critical, detached, alienated stance, the capacity for disinterested moral judgment—are not necessarily inherent in the role or in any personal disposition. Indeed, the appeal of socialism to intellectuals in Eastern Europe, as described by these authors, is very similar to the appeal it has had to generations of Western intellectuals as they succumbed to its various incarnations, first in the Soviet Union in the 30's, later in Cuba in the 60's, and in China in the early 70's:

> A scientifically ordered society held great attractions for the Eastern European intelligentsia, as did the fact that intellectuals were called upon for their expert knowledge in the construction of a new social order. They were exhilarated at the opportunity to help eliminate the obstacles which had hitherto prevented the creation of a new society. . . .
>
> From now on the people with the requisite professional knowledge would be the ones to make the decisions. It gratified them to think that knowledge, not property, would legitimize the right to make decisions. . . .

Are Western intellectuals also capable of undergoing the transformation from social critic into functionary-bureaucrat guarding the sacred secular doctrines? The observations of Konrad and Szelenyi call to mind recent American theorizing about a "new class" emerging in Western societies and somewhat similarly propelled by the potent combination of idealism and self-interest. Perhaps a major conclusion one may draw from this book is that, contrary to our cherished beliefs, intellectuals can be comfortable with power and with a political arrangement that gives them and their ideas adequate recognition.

At the same time one cannot help observing that the authors of this complex and illuminating work exemplify a type of intellectual quite unlike the East European prototype they portray. They are not only well informed and knowledgeable far beyond the confines of their specialties, but they also display a moral sensibility and an uncompromising critical impulse which cannot be silenced or reconciled with the legitimation of unchecked power.

Men in Battle

THE BOER WAR. By THOMAS PAKENHAM. *Random House. 718 pp. $20.00.*

Reviewed by STEPHEN ROSEN

THE people who think about American foreign policy have recently emerged from their post-Vietnam hangovers, but it is not clear that they have come any closer to a realistic appreciation of limited war. Like people getting over real hangovers, they seem to believe that some perfect mean can be struck between abstinence and indulgence. They have gotten over "Never again," and now think in terms of "Yes, I will, but not too much, and only under the right circumstances." Just what those circumstances may be is under debate, but it does seem as if the lesson now being drawn from the Vietnam war is that we should look for little wars that will be, if not splendid, then rationally fought and soon over. "Quick-reaction forces" will act decisively to end clear threats to our vital interests and will not get bogged down in messy local conflicts.

The value of Thomas Pakenham's superb book on the Boer War is that it demonstrates just how fanciful is the present understanding of war. The Boer War, as Pakenham describes it, was supposed to be the splendid, limited war, par

STEPHEN ROSEN, *a new contributor, is a member of the National Security Studies program at Harvard's Center for International Affairs.*

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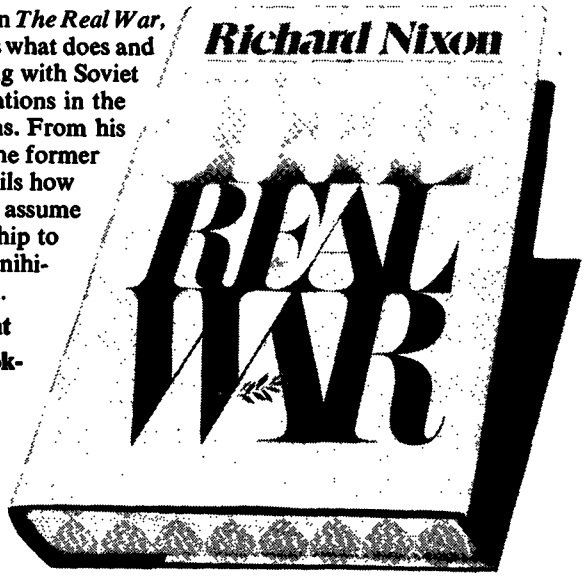

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excellence. The main worry of many of the officers dispatched from Britain to fight in South Africa was that the war would be over before they arrived. Yet the war lasted over two years and killed, by one means or another, about 100,000 white men, women, and children. The way in which Great Britain successfully came to terms with the nasty drawn-out reality of that war provides the subject of Pakenham's book.

The war was a distinctly political effort. There was no military threat to the security of the British empire. The High Commissioner for South Africa, Alfred Milner, freely admitted in private that he had provoked the war by thwarting the progress of negotiations that could have resolved the immediate problem, which was how to obtain political rights for the English-speaking immigrants to the Dutch-settled Republic of Transvaal. "I precipitated the crisis which was inevitable, before it was too late. It is not a very agreeable, and in many eyes, not a very creditable piece of business to have been largely instrumental in bringing about a large war." Milner's object was to break the political power of the Boers, the descendants of the original Dutch colonials, and to create an Anglicized South Africa that would become a part of a white British Commonwealth as strong and diverse as Britain alone was small and weak.

Pakenham's book, however, is not essentially about politics, national security, or theories of coercive diplomacy, but about the business of killing soldiers, a subject we tend not to want to think about. Two themes emerge from the book. The first is that the problems of conducting a war are almost incomprehensible in peacetime, and are comprehended slowly, if at all, only after the fighting begins; all the abstract wisdom in the world seems to be of singularly little value without the benefit of practice with the real thing. The second theme has to do with the attitudes of Western society toward war.

The technical revolution that most affected the Boer War was the widespread availability of rapid-fire rifles firing smokeless ammunition. This had the effect of transforming the battlefield into a place in which the enemy could riddle you with bullets before you ever saw him. The temptation may be strong to despise the military mind for not having seen the answer to this problem ahead of time: the men should spread out and take cover so as to present less of a target to massed rifle fire. But this response was just as obscure, at the time, to the civilian correspondents observing the British as it was to the British military. One newspaperman watched as British troops attacked up a hill devoid of cover. How were they to avoid being mowed down as they had been in the past?

> And then came the most extraordinary revolution, sudden, astounding, brilliant, almost incomprehensible. Across the railways, the South Lancashires suddenly rose up out of the ground . . . and all began to run, not in stiff lines, but with the graceful spreading of a bird's wings, straight up the hill. . . .

Similarly, the British had to solve the problem of how to get across the Tugela River along which the Boers had entrenched themselves. Three times the troops were sent out, and three times they were called back by the senior British officer, Redverse Buller, who had the sense to recognize that he had not yet solved the problem. For this he was accused, by civilians and officers, of having lost his nerve. The fourth time, he planned an attack that involved scrambling from hill to hill, behind an artillery barrage, until the Boer line of defense was gotten around. A simple enough plan, and successful, but one intelligent civilian present at the scene, Winston Churchill, doubted its wisdom.

Before condemning the stupidity of soldiers, we might consider the problem of how to go about getting men who are nicely dispersed, hidden, and safe to stand up and walk into a field of fire, or even just to sit up and use their weapons, when the inevitable time to move forward comes. After the problem has been worked out in battle, the solution is trivially obvious. You need officers who are much braver but

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also more sensible than before, who are bold enough to walk about for hours in the middle of a field drenched in bullets and say, "If I give you a lead, if your General gives you a lead—will you come on?," but who are more level-headed than the officer who issued this request and who then led his men into an indefensible position. Paradoxically, personal leadership becomes more important as technology increases the deadliness of war.

WAR can only be fully comprehended by fighting it, but an army must be willing to learn, and able to survive in battle until it has learned. The British army made many mistakes but redeemed itself by its willingness to relieve officers who had not demonstrated an ability to learn the new facts of war, and to promote those who had. The practice of relieving unworthy officers was so common that it acquired a name, Stellenbosch-ing, after the rear-area town to which these unhappy officers were sent. By contrast, battlefield promotions and demotions were rare in the American army in Vietnam.

The willingness to learn, however, is nothing if the morale of the army disintegrates while it goes through the necessary period of adjustment, as men die without apparent purpose. This is where personal leadership again comes in. Why did the British army not become unfit for combat after three unsuccessful efforts to cross the Tugela? The answer, in large part, is Redverse Buller. An account of one unsuccessful attack written by a private is instructive:

> "Advance" was the order. We did, a riderless horse galloped through us. . . . We got up again unhurt, and as we went, whizz-whizz-whizz-whizz, came the bullets, over went a couple of our fellows, and a shell came in front and blinded us. I was spitting dust for the next few minutes, and it was almost like groping in the dark, but we heard a voice behind us. "Steady, men, don't lose your heads." It was Buller's. We did not lose them after that, but gripped our rifles and made straight through the smoke.

Buller's gallantry created a bond between his men and him that survived repeated defeats, and that gave Buller the time to learn the modern way of war. One wonders whether students of management in the Pentagon today understand this phenomenon, and whether average American soldiers in Vietnam had enough faith in their officers to sustain them as they muddled their way toward an understanding of rural counterinsurgency.

THE other theme in Pakenham's book is less explicitly military. One is struck by a number of events Pakenham reports. The British soldiers cheered when they won battles. Victories were celebrated in London. Even now in America we half-recall the names of British victories in South Africa, though we are not sure whether we read them in Kipling or in a history book: Kimberly, Mafeking, Ladysmith. In a very real sense, the war was glorious for the British, and not only for civilians and aristocrats. A private wrote home after a battle:

> I felt sick at the sight of the dead and dying, horrible sight, awful in their ghastliness, blood to meet the eyes, groans to meet the ears, and among this we had to sleep . . . but strange as it may seem, I am eager to be in battle again now. . . .

The Boer War was morally ambiguous to a greater degree than any we have had to fight. Winston Churchill was strong for the war, but in awe of the Boers. After a battle, writes Pakenham,

> he had heard a sound which was even worse than the sound of shells; the sound of Boers singing psalms. "It struck the fear of God in me. What sort of men were we fighting? They have the better cause—and the cause is everything—at least I mean to them it is the better cause."

Churchill sometimes believed the British wanted nothing out of the war but control of the gold mines of Johannesburg. Yet he never doubted the propriety of the war, any more than did the British infantryman.

There was a time when it did not occur to men who might have been

Arabs in the Jewish State

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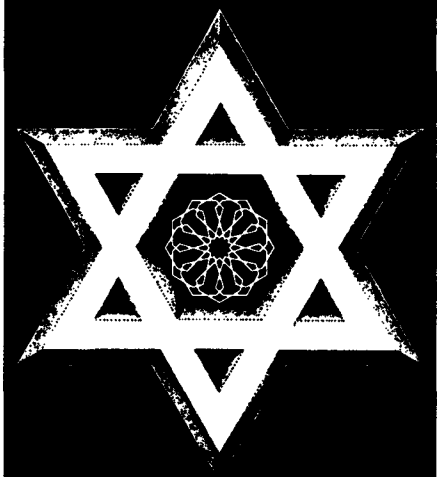
By Ian Lustick



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our grandfathers—men of the age of the veterans still alive when Pakenham interviewed them for his book—to question the idea that it was, if not sweet, then natural to kill and be killed when your country called you. It was simply not true for them that there was no fate worse than death. The suicides of many officers who were Stellenbosch-ed suggest what was worse than death. It is easy to explain but also easy to forget the decay of the religious faith and nationalism that constituted the morale of the West. Until the day before yesterday, historically, the moral foundation for limited war existed in the great democracies in a way that it does not now. One wonders whether this, too, has crossed the minds of the men who must think about our next war.

Pakenham's book is more like a novel than a history in that it illuminates the psychological as well as the material dimensions of war, and forces us to reflect upon the implications of the changes that have occurred within ourselves.

Due Process

DEMOCRACY AND DISTRUST: A THEORY OF JUDICIAL REVIEW. By JOHN HART ELY. *Harvard University Press. 268 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by FRANKLIN HUNT

THE Burger era of the Supreme Court is now ten years old. Throughout its life, legal scholars have complained that the Burger Court is making a "counterassault" on the earlier work of the Warren Court, or at the very least is "sniping" at it. Yet for some time now commentators have also been examining more fundamentally the work of both Courts, which faces them with some cruel issues concerning the scope of Supreme Court review of government actions.

Liberal proponents of "structural reform," for example, one of the trendy developments in contemporary constitutional scholarship which seeks to use "public law litigation" to reorganize the major institutions of society, need a very active Supreme Court with broad powers if they are to effect large-scale changes. But notwithstanding *Roe* v. *Wade*, the very liberal abortion decision, these reformers are also frightened of what the conservative Burger Court might do with such powers. Others are struggling with the issue of the Court's role because of *Roe* v. *Wade* itself. Many constitutional lawyers, even liberal ones, see the decision as something of a public scandal, a brutal exercise in "substantive due process" in which the Court simply proclaimed one of its favorite middle-class values.

John Hart Ely, a young Harvard Law School professor, was one of those appalled by *Roe* v. *Wade* (his 1973 article on the case is now a classic), and he wants everyone to understand how badly the Burger Court's enforcement of "fundamental values," such as abortion, contrasts with the work of the Warren Court. It is not, however, as one might expect, that Ely simply likes the Warren Court's fundamental values better. On the contrary, he is convinced that, whatever the public might believe, the Warren Court did not play the game of proclaiming its favorite values; its famous activism was actually, in his view, a powerful support for representative democracy. In his new book, *Democracy and Distrust*, Ely works this conviction into a broad and careful reargument of the old and protracted controversy over the proper scope of judicial review.

The result is a rare and superior book that runs counter to the fashionable academic line that is fully committed to the fundamental-values view. Whether or not the reader finally agrees that the work of the Warren Court was a major

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support for democracy, he will likely believe that Ely's book is. Together with other signs of the growing popularity of judicial conservatism—the belief that "out of a respect for the democratic process, . . . the Court should keep its hands off the legislature's value judgments"—the book constitutes a welcome and heartening event. And as Ely, clearly a political liberal, understands, judicial conservatism does not imply either political conservatism, as many now think, or political liberalism, as others thought fifty years ago. It means simply that the judges will, like referees, "intervene only when one team is gaining unfair advantage, not because the 'wrong' team has scored."

Ely's book is a reworking of law-review articles published over the past several years, and while it deploys all the machinery of legal scholarship, it is wholly unlike the usual graceless legal prose. The book is closely reasoned and demands close reading, but Ely writes with a directness and wit that make even the fine print in his notes engrossing. More importantly, he sees clearly and speaks candidly. Best of all, Ely argues fairly and always tries to confront the strongest arguments against his own positions. One who disagrees with Ely can relax while reading him, confident that he will, in due course, reach the reader's favorite arguments and will state them accurately.

AN OUTLINE of Ely's reasoning will at least suggest the strength and persuasiveness, and some of the important detail, of his argument. The question to be answered is this: when judges decide constitutional issues, where do they find the principles they use? The question has given rise to a long-standing dispute between "interpretivism," the view that in applying constitutional clauses judges should enforce only those principles that are expressed or implied by their language, and "noninterpretivism," the view that judges should enforce principles not found in the Constitution itself and for which they must go to some outside source. Noninterpretivism is fatally vulnerable to the charge that it is incompatible with democracy and, as Ely says, "[t]his, in America, is a charge that matters." Interpretivism, too, because it imposes on the present generation the views of past ones, may to some extent be anti-democratic, but it fits much more closely with our usual ideas about law and written documents and how they work. Interpretivism is, therefore, far preferable. But it has a difficulty of its own.

Constitutional clauses run from the specific and easy to interpret (the President shall "have attained to the age of thirty-five years"), through those for which interpretation is more difficult but still possible ("cruel and unusual punishments [shall not be] inflicted"), to those which do not offer enough content to permit interpretation of any kind and which, if they are to be used at all, require a look to some source beyond the words. These "open-ended" clauses are the

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Fourteenth Amendment provisions that no state "shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens" or deny persons "the equal protection of the laws," and, Ely argues, the Ninth Amendment which states that "[t]he enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." As Ely says, however, the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendment clauses prohibiting the deprivation of "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law" are definitely not among the open-ended clauses.

Because interpretivism relies upon constitutional language, but the language of the open-ended clauses calls for reference to some other unspecified sources (what *are* the immunities of citizens, for example?), interpretivism contains a contradiction. Nevertheless, it does no good—indeed, it produces only anti-democratic disaster—to look to noninterpretivism as the way a judge might find fundamental values outside the Constitution. In a devastating and scornful chapter that frequently draws blood ("is [the Constitution] really supposed to keep up with the *New York Review of Books*?"), Ely describes the efforts of the leading commentators (like J. Skelly Wright, Laurence Tribe, Archibald Cox, Harry Wellington, Ronald Dworkin, Thomas Grey, Kenneth Karst, Harold Horowitz, Frank Michelman, and Abram Chayes, to name just a few) to concoct formulas to justify the Court's declaring their own favorite (usually upper-middle-class) values to be "fundamental" and thus constitutionally enforceable. They mix their strange farragoes out of any source that comes to hand: a judge's own views, natural law, "neutral principles," reason (moral philosophy), tradition, a judge's perception of popular consensus ("the Fuehrer principle"), and a prediction of future consensus. Ely believes that even so superior a constitutional lawyer as the late Alexander Bickel, a man he greatly admires, was misled into searching for fundamental values (a search Bickel himself came to realize was futile) by the false premise that it was the Supreme Court's role to define such values.

If our only choice were between a "clause-bound" interpretivism and noninterpretivism, Ely would opt for the former and simply have the courts stay away from the open-ended clauses. He believes, however, that there is another choice. Ely argues for a kind of expanded interpretivism, one which is entirely consistent with the usual construction of legal documents. He would seek principles for enforcing the open-ended clauses in the basic purposes and structure of the Constitution as a whole. Because the Constitution deals very little in pure values and is overwhelmingly a procedural document (which, as Ely suggests, merely the reading of a few pages will show), it follows that such principles must also pertain to procedural matters.

Among the procedural mechanisms of the Constitution are, of course, those of representative government, and Ely would use the open-ended clauses to insure the proper working of these mechanisms. But there is more to the Constitution's representative government than just machinery; there is also the principle of "virtual representation." Because of prejudice on the part of the majority, certain minorities, even if they have the vote, may not have effective actual representation sufficient to protect their interests through ordinary political wheeling and dealing. Racial minorities, illegitimate children, and aliens (who have no vote at all) are the classic examples of such groups. They may still enjoy "virtual representation," however, through other similarly situated groups who have greater political influence, and who by taking care of themselves will also take care of the minorities. But virtual representation will work only if the hostile majority is not permitted to subject the minorities to harsher treatment than it gives itself. If it does treat the minorities differently, it must do so for substantial reasons

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unrelated to an intent to injure them.

This, then, is Ely's theory: the open-ended clauses authorize a limited judicial review that would enforce "due process of lawmaking" (a phrase Ely borrows from Hans Linde) by policing the machinery of representation and virtual representation. Such a theory would leave the people to spell out fundamental values for themselves, and would confine judges to functions they can perform well.

ELY did not invent his interpretivism. It was first expressed judicially in a famous footnote by Justice Stone in the 1938 case of *United States* v. *Carolene Products Co.*, which held that a statute prohibiting shipment of filled milk was "rational" and, therefore, valid. Justice Stone suggested that the Court might subject to more severe scrutiny than a mere test of rationality a statute that restricted "political processes" (that is, the machinery of representative government) or was "directed at particular . . . minorities" or embodied "prejudice against discrete and insular minorities" (and, thereby, deprived such groups, which are politically powerless, of virtual representation).

Ely believes that the Supreme Court actually began to implement *Carolene Products* only with the advent of the Warren era. He analyzes the Court's decisions since then to show that they fall into a pattern consistent with his theory (even though, as he acknowledges, the Warren Court itself often used the language of fundamental values). Ely effectively rationalizes many of the free-speech and voting-rights cases and argues for the revival of judicial review of legislative delegations of authority to administrative agencies. Such review died in the 1930's a "death by association" with substantive due-process doctrines of laissez-faire economics. It is needed now, however, to overcome the desire of legislatures to avoid difficult political decisions by passing them on to politically unaccountable agencies.

Ely also analyzes the Supreme Court's cases protecting minorities. He makes good sense of the equal-protection doctrines that require a "rational basis" for all legislation and subject "suspect classifications" to "special scrutiny," and he says illuminating things about affirmative action and the dealth penalty. His analysis also leads to many clear-eyed conclusions (which, however, will be objectionable to some): the Constitution gives the poor no remedy for poverty because poverty does not stem from government action intended to hurt them; the political progress and influence of women is such that they are no longer a discrete and insular group (never having been a minority) needing protection, although they may still need protection from laws passed in earlier times.

But it is here also that the tightness and power of Ely's argument begins to unravel. His effort to fit every decision into his scheme is sometimes dazzling, but not always persuasive. For one who honors constitutional language so much, Ely is too quick to acquiesce in decisions, like those in some First Amendment cases, that he concedes go beyond what the words will bear, and to agree with *Reynolds* v. *Sims* that the Fourteenth Amendment applies to voting rights, notwithstanding the apparent import of Sections 1 and 2 read together. Finally, to give minorities the last measure of protection, Ely would have judges assessing attitudes, such as the empathy of legislators, which he demonstrates elsewhere judges are unable to do.

ONE does not, however, have to agree with Ely's reading of every case to recognize that his book is a major work from which believers in democracy can take heart. It will not, of course, settle issues which have been fought over for generations. But those who want to press on with their judicial campaigns for reform of one kind or another must now deal with it (and they can no longer get away with simply

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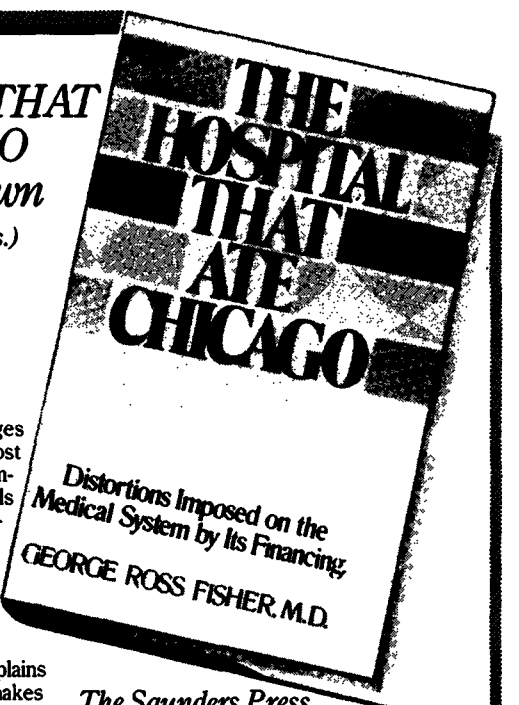

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proclaiming, as one scholar did recently, that the judge's task is to search "for what is true, right, or just"). For those, on the other hand, who believe with Ely that the majority can take care of itself, and who have their own ideas about fundamental values on which they do not need instruction from judges, Ely's book is satisfying and cheering.

Counter-Church

THE GNOSTIC GOSPELS. By ELAINE PAGELS. *Random House. 182 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by HYAM MACCOBY

GNOSTICISM, an esoteric movement in ancient religion, has achieved surprising topicality. It may even be regarded as the form of religion most congenial to the modern world. Certain popular sects (such as Scientology) are really modern versions of gnosticism, with their description of earth as a lost, evil planet, containing trapped seeds of divinity, to be redeemed only by intervention of saviors from outer space. Anyone who regards himself as religious but "opposed to organized religion" is liable to gravitate toward the gnostic position.

The drawback of gnosticism is that its adherents turn away from the practical problems of the world. They regard themselves as living on this earth as aliens, having wandered here somehow by mistake. They form small isolated groups devoted to developing the secret knowledge (*gnosis*) of how to link up with their true home. Paupers who have learned that they are really princes, they reject the hovel in which they find themselves, assert their newly-discovered identity, and seek to return to the palace.

This is an attitude that arises in periods when the outward world affords little satisfaction or happiness, and particularly when political expression is stifled by great impersonal forces. Such a time was that of the Greco-Roman world, and such a time is our own. The gnostic movement thus has much to say to troubled, alienated souls of our generation.

Until quite recently, our knowledge of ancient gnosticism was sparse, being confined to quotations and descriptions embedded in the writings of its Christian opponents, such as Irenaeus and Tertullian, who regarded gnosticism as a Christian heresy. Modern scholars, however, have suggested that gnosticism existed *before* Christianity, and only took a Christian form at a later stage. In the 19th century, some very interesting Christian gnostic documents were brought to light, including the *Gospel of Mary* and the *Apocryphon of John*. Finally, in 1945, a library of gnostic documents (some non-Christian) was discovered at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt. They had been hidden in jars, probably by some gnostic-minded monk, at a time when the official Christian church was busily engaged in suppressing all the gnostic writings it could find. These manuscripts were in the Coptic (late Egyptian) language and were written in the 4th century, but were evidently translations of Greek originals dating from the 2nd century and perhaps earlier. From this discovery arose a huge scholarly industry, similar in dimensions to that based on the Dead Sea Scrolls. It will be many years before the full impact of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts can be gauged.

THE most interesting questions to which definitive answers are being sought relate to the connections between gnosticism and Christianity. Even though official Christianity persecuted gnosticism in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, its own origins may be very much bound up with this "heresy." Many passages in the New Testament, especially in the Epistles of Paul and the Gospel of John, have a strongly gnostic flavor. The central myth of Pauline Christianity—the rescue of initiates from a fallen world by a descending and ascending Savior—is essentially gnostic in nature. So the question again presents itself: which came first, gnosticism or Christianity? And why did gnosticism and official Christianity eventually come into conflict? What about Jesus himself? Was he a gnostic teacher, or did gnostic ideas enter Christianity only with Paul? Or was Jesus an essentially Jewish teacher whose career was transformed into a gnostic myth after his death?

There are also some very interesting questions about the relation between gnosticism and Jewish mysticism. There can be no doubt that the vocabulary of Jewish mysticism, from its earliest literary manifestations, is permeated with expressions derived from gnosticism, though these expressions are given a Jewish meaning at variance with the dualism and world-weariness of gnosticism itself. But can it be, as Moritz Friedlander has argued, that the historical origin of gnosticism is actually to be found in heterodox Judaism? Or was gnosticism (as Gershom Scholem has remarked) "conceived in the struggle against Judaism as the conqueror of mythology"? Among the Nag Hammadi manuscripts are some that make no reference to Christianity but are full of Jewish references. Are these the work of heretical Jews, or of non-Jews both fascinated and repelled by Judaism who constructed a mythology from Jewish materials by standing Judaism on its head?

Perhaps we should look for the origins of gnosticism independently of both Christianity and Judaism, in the religiosity of the Hellenistic world. A few of the Nag Hammadi texts are entirely pagan. There are strong similarities between gnosticism and pagan forms of mysticism: Hermetism, which was associated with the worship of the Egyptian god Thoth, and the mystery-religions associated with fertility deities (in their Hellenistic elaborations). Special claims can be made also for a background of Zoroastrianism, or even of Buddhism (which was known in the Hellenistic world). Arguments for a Hellenistic origin of gnosticism were once thought to have been refuted, but the pagan gnostic texts of Nag

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Hammadi have reopened the debate. And this again revives the question of whether Paul created Christianity by injecting, into a not unusual Jewish messianic group, ideas derived from the pagan mystical sects of his native Tarsus.

THE gnostic texts of Nag Hammadi have never received the publicity given to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Elaine Pagels has now written a book for the general reader in order to remedy the regrettable public ignorance of this important subject. Professor Pagels's professional work has been concerned with the Nag Hammadi documents, and she has previously written scholarly works on the connections between these documents and the New Testament.

As the only existing guide on the subject for the general reader, Professor Pagels's book has to be recommended, but it is disappointing. The author does not treat the subject of gnosticism with the breadth it deserves. Her chief topic is the conflict between Christian gnosticism and orthodox Christianity in the 2nd century, and she almost ignores aspects of the Nag Hammadi texts not relevant to this issue. She does, however, provide an introduction of wider scope, describing in readable fashion the history of the Nag Hammadi discovery, including the political and scholarly infighting that took place before the manuscripts were released to the world, and also giving a brief summary of the work that has been done on the manuscripts so far.

In her treatment of the conflict between orthodoxy and gnosticism, Professor Pagels seeks first of all to revise the (allegedly) widely held view of early Christianity as consisting of a central church with a lunatic fringe, and to give us instead a picture of a mass of rival sects of which the so-called orthodox church was only one and not even the most promising. As for the gnostics, she shows that, in contrast to orthodox Christians, they were unconcerned with institutional forms, and their communities were characterized by equality, even extending to the choice of priests and prophets by lot. They narrowed the gap between the human and the divine to such an extent that the initiate was regarded as sharing deity with the Savior, Jesus. She gives an attractive picture of the gnostics, emphasizing the spontaneity and inwardness of their religious approach, and arguing that they were pro-feminist. At the same time, she freely admits that such a religion, by reason of its anti-institutionalism and its tendency to split into innumerable groups, was ill-adapted for survival over a long period.

Her picture of the gnostics is considerably idealized in the interests of recommending them to modern libertarians and anti-authoritarians. The darker side of the gnostics is hardly touched on: their obsession with the evil of this world, their hatred of sex, their elitism, their mystagogic pretension, and at times their "transcendence" of ordinary morality. Still, a valuable description is given of the Valentinians, the one gnostic group that made a serious effort to combine mystical insight with the claims of ordinary communal life.

PROFESSOR PAGELS, unfortunately, has a tedious bee in her bonnet. This is her idea that doctrinal differences between orthodox and gnostic Christians can often be explained in terms of "politics." She applies this approach, for example, to the orthodox insistence on strict monotheism, as opposed to the gnostic belief that the creator of the world was a minor deity (suffering from megalomania), and that the true, ineffable God was far above him. Professor Pagels argues that this difference of doctrine reflected a difference of political, or organizational, attitude: the orthodox hierarchy, with the Bishop of Rome at its apex, was projected into the heavens in the shape of God and His angels. She does not consider the possibility, exemplified by Judaism, that a religion can insist on strict monotheism while its religious institutions remain unhierarchical and decentralized (there was never any Jewish equivalent to the Pope). Professor Pagels here puts the cart before the horse. For the Church, monotheism was a philosophy of life that included among its consequences the need to

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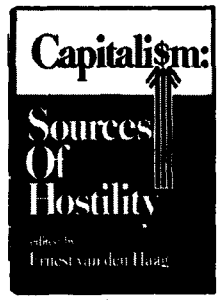

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take seriously the organization of the community of the faithful. If this world was created by the One God, and not by a limited or flawed underling, then it must be basically good, demanding and repaying efforts to set it in order.

Professor Pagels has very little to say about the personality of the historical Jesus, but her general approach suggests that she thinks he was more like the gnostics than the orthodox, and that his alleged conflict with the Pharisees foreshadowed the gnostic struggle with officialdom. At one point, in a rare direct reference to the historical Jesus, she suggests that the gnostics' free attitude toward women reflected that of Jesus, who "violated Jewish convention by talking openly with women, and . . . included them among his companions." But Jesus did not in fact "violate Jewish convention," since in his easy relationship with women he was following the well-understood pattern of the Jewish prophet (compare Elijah with the widow of Zarephath and Elisha with the woman of Shunem). On the other hand, the feminism of the gnostics can easily be exaggerated; often it only amounted to a contempt for sex and a desire to reduce all mankind to neuter beings.

In general, the role of Judaism in this book is to act as a kind of prototype for the patriarchal, hierarchical structure eventually assumed by the Catholic Church. Opposed to both Judaism and Catholic Christianity is the free individualism of the gnostic sects. This is too simple, not only because it exaggerates the "freedom" of gnosticism but also because the Catholic Church was much more rigid, both doctrinally and institutionally, than Judaism had ever been.

The position of women under Pharisaic Judaism was relatively good: they were allowed to own property even after marriage, to be divorced if ill treated, to refuse an uncongenial marriage. These rights were all lost under Catholic Christianity. The recognition of a female element in the Divine—which Professor Pagels claims as an original achievement of the gnostics—was far from unknown in Judaism, where, for example, one of the divine names, *Shaddai*, means "breast," and another *Rahaman* ("merciful") is derived from a root meaning "womb." The idea of divine femininity is prominent, of course, in Jewish medieval mysticism. The doctrine that Adam was originally hermaphroditic (based on Genesis 1:27, "male and female created He them") is a commonplace of the aggadic tradition. The gnostics probably took this idea from the aggada. It is most unlikely that a talmudic rabbi derived it from Plato, as Professor Pagels asserts, especially as the idea can be traced back to Babylonian literature.

Professor Pagels's simple opposition of gnostics to orthodox Christians will not do. The real problem is the extreme polarization which Christianity underwent. Why did it divide into lawless gnostics on the one hand and rigidly organized "male-chauvinist" Catholics on the other? Why did the Church produce a hierarchy very similar to the pattern falsely attributed to the Pharisees in the (hostile) descriptions of the Gospels? Why was there no middle ground between a complete rejection of human institutions and the formation of a bureaucracy with a penchant for repression? The answer to this, I suggest, lies in the antinomianism of Pauline Christianity—its extremist antagonism to the concept of law. This is what divided Christendom into those trying to capture an impossible spontaneity and those struggling, by an inevitably exaggerated and overstructured reaction, to infuse a commonsense practicality into the business of communal living. Official Christianity has always had to struggle desperately with people who take the original tenets of Pauline Christianity seriously, and so threaten to destroy all continuity and viability in society. The pendulum thus swings between anarchy and repression.

THE study of the gnostic texts will continue to throw light both on the origins of Pauline Christianity and on its subsequent struggles. I doubt if it will throw much light on Jesus himself, since he was rooted in Pharisaic Judaism. Professor Pagels's book, on the whole, is a useful but flawed interim report, a guide to the many fascinating possibilities that have been opened up, but a guide that should be consulted with caution.

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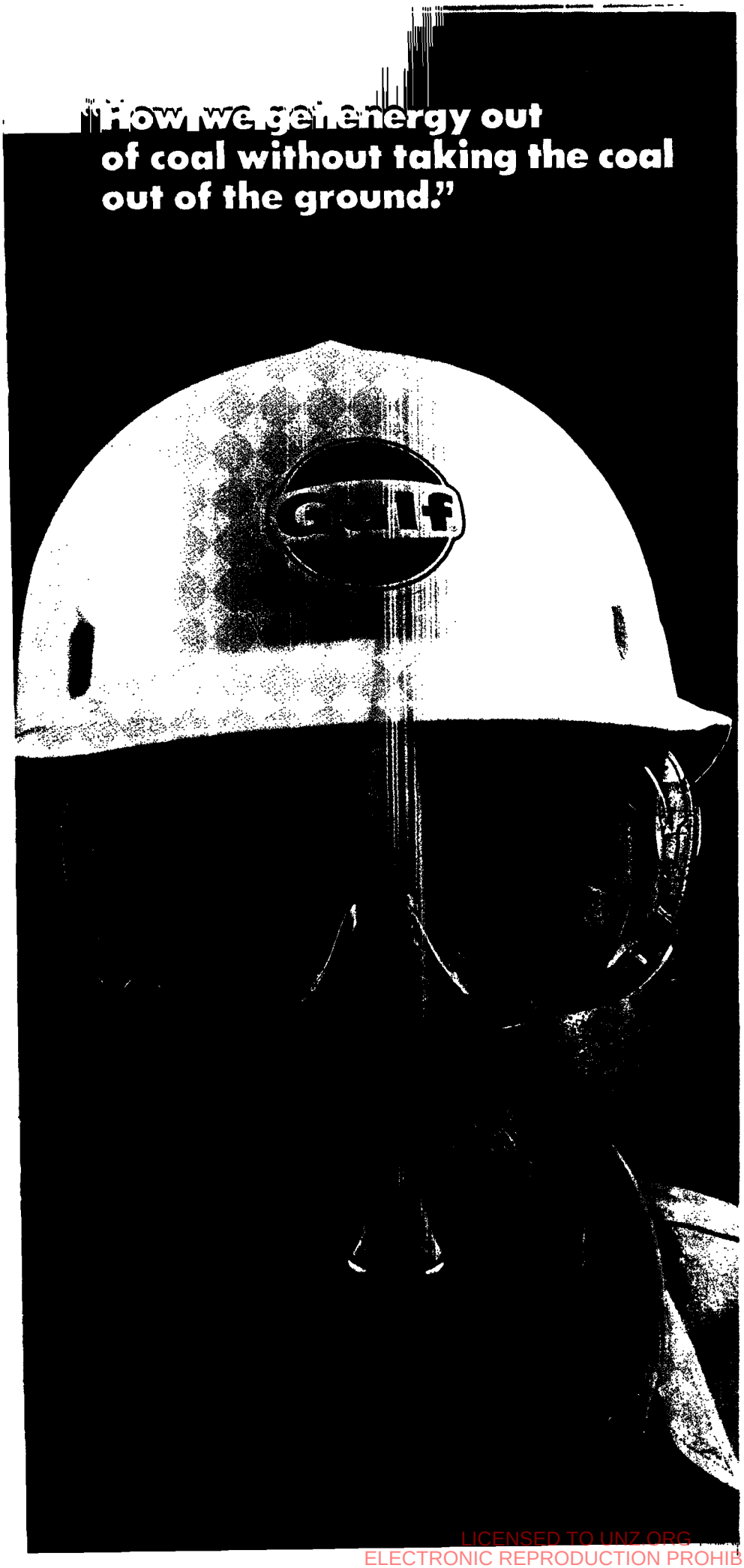

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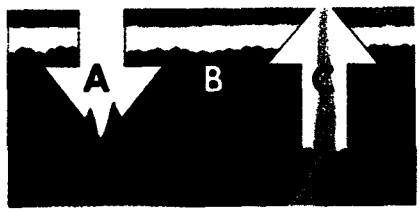

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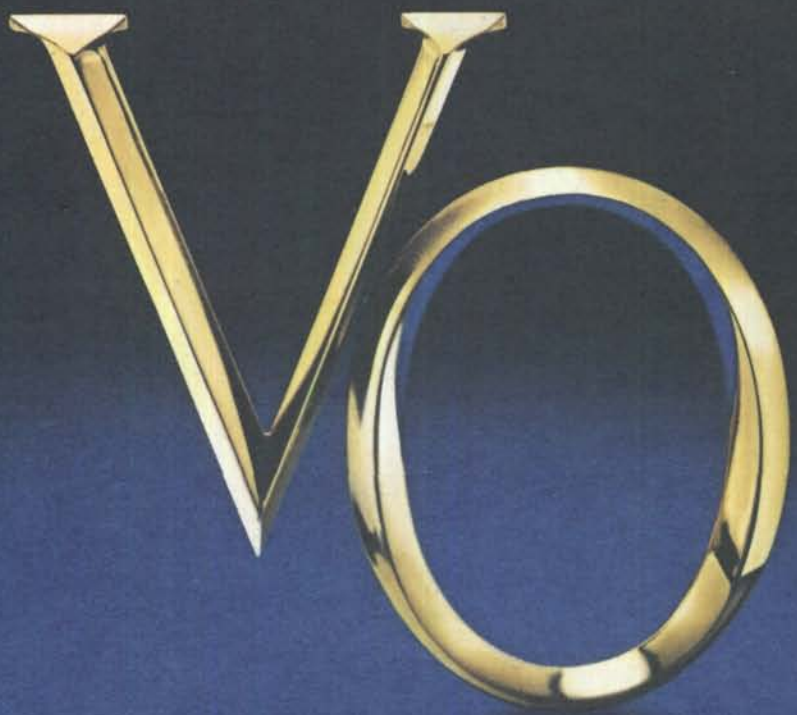

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